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NATURAL PHENOMENA

And their Spiritual Lessons

NATURAL PHENOMENA

AND THEIR

Spiritual Lessons.

MUIR AND PATERSON, PRINTERS, EDINBURGH.

NATURAL PHENOMENA

AND THEIR

Spiritual Lessons.

BY

ANN M. BRAYLEY.

'God collected and resumed in man
The firmaments, the strata, and the lights,
Fish, fowl, and beast, and insect,—all their claims
Of various life caught back upon His arm,
Reorganized, and constituted MAN,
The microcosm.'

MRS. BROWNING.

JAMES SPEIRS,
36 BLOOMSBURY STREET, LONDON.
1870.

141. k. 355.

PREFACE.

SO little has at present been contributed in aid of the elucidation of the analogies of nature by the application of the principles of correspondence, that this volume may be regarded as an attempt in an almost untrodden path, through a field which is absolutely inexhaustible. During its composition glimpses have been obtained of the rich harvest of instruction and delight similar studies may yield, when undertaken by writers possessing an adequate acquaintance with natural science, and proportionate spiritual knowledge and experience. But the field lies open to labourers of every variety of qualifications; and in the paucity of higher productions these essays may not, perhaps, be wholly unacceptable. They are offered simply as a series of efforts towards the spiritual interpretation of the natural facts and phenomena with which they deal. In reference to these, also, they make no pretension to more than the familiar knowledge to be gathered from an elementary treatise or a popular lecture.

The work is slight in texture, as compared with the lepth and fulness of meaning involved in the phenonena selected for illustration; but profound discussion vas not within either the writer's design or her ability. Many interesting particulars in all the subjects conidered have been left unnoticed, from the difficulty of rriving at a satisfactory explanation of them; whilst thers may, possibly, be discerned for which deficient nowledge is the only excuse.

Such as it is, this little volume is submitted to the eader in the hope that it may yield some small amount f benefit and gratification.

LONDON, *September* 1870.

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INSECT METAMORPHOSIS.

Insect Metamorphosis.

BUTTERFLIES.

'Shall the poor worm that shocks thy sight,
The humblest form in nature's brain,
Thus rise in new-born lustre bright,
And yet the emblem teach in vain?'
THE BUTTERFLY'S BIRTHDAY.

IN the infancy of the human race—its golden age of love and innocence—outward nature with all its objects, scenery, and phenomena, appealed not, as now, only to the senses, or, at best, to the imaginations of men, but was an open volume revealing the will and wisdom of its divine Author. The book of nature, however, was gradually closed, and the meaning of its symbols receded from the conscious mind. First, the intuitive perception of their significance failed; next, the desire and ability to attain, by voluntary effort, an intellectual knowledge of particulars that previously lay open to the vision of those who sought them. An absence of all appreciation of this interior wisdom followed; succeeded by an absolute denial of its existence. Hence 'meadow, grove, and stream,' with all their accessories,

have long since come to be regarded as meadow, grove, and stream, and nothing more; and thus

'There hath passed away a glory from the earth,'

only to be regained by retracing in an ascending order the steps by which the descent was accomplished. Still, though perception, knowledge, and conviction of the representative character of the outer world have ceased, there are a few phenomena whose lowest and most external analogies are even now recognised;—not, indeed, as types of corresponding spiritual phenomena, but as emblems that poetry willingly appropriates as belonging to her own domain. Prominent among these is the metamorphosis of insects; and, in particular, the transformation of the crawling caterpillar into the winged butterfly, resplendent with colour and burnished gold.

The contrast between the first and the final state of this insect is too striking, and some of the analogies of each are too obvious, to have escaped general notice; the one being received as an emblem of man's mortal, earthly life; and the other as an image of his immortal and heavenly state, when released from the trammels of materiality. The caterpillar is a creeping worm—often unsightly and repulsive—living close to the earth, and possessing feeble powers of locomotion and imperfect senses. It feeds with indiscriminate voracity, nearly the whole of its body being occupied by a capacious stomach; and dwells alone, without power to perpetuate its species. The butterfly is an aerial creature, all grace and beauty. It inhabits a higher element, emulative of a discrete degree above the scene of its former existence, and sails in freedom on the soft summer breeze, above the stains and dust of earth. With

a chosen mate it flits from flower to flower, in colours bright as they;

'Quaffs fragrant nectar from their cups of gold;'

and enjoys in its progeny an imitation of the immortality it typifies.

These particulars illustrate in a remarkable, though general manner, the difference between man's earthly and heavenly life. The first is limited in all directions by time and space, and is subject to numerous imperfections. It gravitates towards the earth by the mere weight of the animal nature and the urgency of its necessities; and, when to these are added its many infirmities, and its liability to disease and pain, heavy indeed is the burden it sometimes may become. Then, on the next plane of natural life is the pressure of domestic, social, and national cares and anxieties; and the inadequacy of man's mental and instrumental powers to the extent and strength of his desires. But in the heavenly state these limitations and imperfections disappear, being laid aside with the body in which they inhere. No longer blunted by materiality, the spiritual senses possess increased susceptibility and acuteness; while, from their harmonious relations with the world in which they are exercised, they are sources only of use and delight, never of pain or annoyance. The affectuous and intellectual faculties, also, being there not only perfectly united, but such as are instrumental in due proportion to the impulsive and the deliberative; and the lower subordinate to the higher; the result of this felicitous balance of powers is the absence of unavailing wishes and futile effort,—angelic desires never transcending the limits of attainment.

But the more particular and exact correspondence of the insect and its metamorphosis is with man's condition by birth, when of necessity he is natural, and his subsequent state, when he has become spiritual; that is, with the preparatory alteration to be effected, that the change of scene induced by death may be from earth to heaven.

No one who attentively watches a caterpillar can fail to observe the persistency with which it feeds. 'Instead of simply eating in order to live, like most other beings, it only lives to eat; it has no other duty to perform at present but to eat as fast and as much as it possibly can in a certain time. Unlike other creatures who allow themselves a certain period between their meals, the larva sets to its feast and does not leave the table until it has devoured all its contents, upon which it immediately begins again elsewhere. No *gourmand* in the world, whether among human beings or brutes, can compare with the insect in this form for the amount of food consumed. Morning, noon, and night is to it only a continual round of feasting; and, as may well be imagined, the larva grows very rapidly accordingly.' There is here presented a striking and accurate image of the merely natural mind, and of the insatiable nature of its desires, whether directed to self or the world. Alexander weeping for more worlds to conquer, is a familiar illustration of the boundless appetite of the love of dominion; but, how often soever repeated, is too apposite to become trite. The selfish love of rule, however, is more subtle and concealed than the love of wealth; for it lies deeper in our nature, and is less clearly present to the consciousness. Few persons admit, even

to themselves, that they desire to subject all around them to their will; while many who are surrounded by comforts and conveniences, or even by luxuries, cherish and openly express an eager longing for increased riches. Possibly the addition sought may not be large,—sufficient only to achieve some supposed good purpose, or to place us on a level with our friends. But as wealth increases so does expenditure. We have a larger house and more servants; enlarged expenses in many directions; and to meet these a further enlargement of means is requisite. It is probably easier to be contented with a small than with a more ample amount of wealth; because, in the former case, the natural desires being accustomed to denial and submission cease to be clamorous; while, in the latter, they become exacting in proportion to the degree of habitual indulgence. Besides, so long as our pecuniary means are confined by narrow limits, our wishes also are limited to simple and natural objects that are useful in themselves and conducive to our welfare; while those that grow out of large possessions are usually for luxuries purely artificial and conventional, productive of no real advantage, and that foster the pride and vanity, or mere love of pleasure, in which they originate. And, however paradoxical the assertion may appear, the simpler our desires—after the necessities of nature are satisfied—the more they belong to our common humanity, and the less to class distinctions, the more easily are they restrained. There is often more contentment in the narrow home where nutritious food and comfortable clothing are sometimes scantly supplied, and never in excess; more enjoyment in its small possessions and few relaxations;

than in the well-appointed mansion where provision for every want in either health or sickness exists in abundance. Not that riches are to be despised or depreciated; for it would be irrational to undervalue the means without which few external advantages are attainable. On the contrary, like other good gifts, they are to be valued and accepted with thankfulness, when they reach us in the upright and energetic pursuit of a profession, or in any other orderly way. It is the hankering after them when no honourable road is sought or opened by Providence for obtaining them, and that chiefly to add to the mere pomp and glitter of life, that is to be condemned and avoided. It is pleasant to gratify such inclinations of the natural man as in themselves are harmless; but to forego the gratification undisturbed is one of the great lessons of life. The caterpillar exactly typifies the increase of appetite that follows each gratification of it; and the natural consequence of its continual feast is its rapid growth. Its outer covering becomes too small for its extended bulk, and it casts its skin; and this operation it repeats several times in the course of its short existence. Could the larva think, would it not reason thus?—'I am a larger and more important insect than I formerly was, how can I be satisfied with an amount of food that sufficed me when I was small?' Thus, then, it proceeds; eating, growing, moulting, and eating again; and thus does the natural man appropriate, distend himself, change the form and covering of his external life, and appropriate again, with ever augmenting eagerness.

The habits of the insect have, however, other analogies more agreeable to contemplate; and in reference to them

is neither an object of disgust nor contempt. The exercise of its indiscriminate voracity is a simple fulfilling of its insect duty. Its business on earth is to eat and grow, and fit itself for its approaching transformation; and its devotion to this end points to corresponding efforts to attain a certain necessary fulness of state in the natural mind before regeneration can commence. This is effected not by the mere impletion of the original form, but by generating within it another, which in due season will expel the former and replace it;—a process repeated several times in succession till maturity is attained. Manhood is preceded by infancy, childhood, boyhood, and youth. The infant is merely corporeal. In childhood the senses are fully developed; and some acquaintance with the world around is imbibed unsought, at every avenue opened by them to the mind within. The boy actively and eagerly accumulates knowledge; the youth reasons and concludes, and so advances towards the complete rationality of manhood. Each of these states has modes of affection and forms of thought, speech, and action peculiar to itself, that have to be laid aside as the higher stage is reached. The infant, gifted with innocence which pervades every movement, glides unconsciously and sweetly into the child; but the other changes are made with increasing self-consciousness and proportional loss of grace; while the last, —the transition from youth to manhood,—is often accompanied by a degree of awkwardness painful to the subject of it, and of assumption offensive to his companions. Even these features have their analogies in the insect. It also experiences difficulty in extricating itself from the old garment, and remains in an uneasy condition till the

new one is adapted for use. One observation will conclude this part of our subject :—through all these variations of state the insect is a larva still, and nothing more; so also the man, when the analogous series of changes is complete, is as purely natural as the infant, and more fully so.

The first particular that arrests attention after the metamorphosis of the insect is accomplished, is the change in the scene of its existence, and its elevation into a representative heaven ;—involving an equal difference in its structure, life, and habits. No longer a creeping thing held down by the strength of its appetites, it sails buoyantly on irridescent wings, as if rejoicing in its deliverance from their exactions :—typifying the liberation of the regenerate mind from earth-born affections and desires, and its freedom to follow the impulses of the purer nature developed within it. So long as we remain immersed in the senses and the low affections of the external man, provided these are gratified, the heart seeks no other good; but when the germs of a higher life are vivified, and the spiritual affections, warmed into activity, seek to be operative in the outer life, we become sensible of the tyranny of the natural mind and its demands. We would do good, but find evil present with us, offering determined opposition to the effort. Works of outward use, the doing of good externally, provided the proprium can have the credit of the performance, are not, indeed, always attended with difficulty. The natural man loves to feel his importance; and, as developed in some individuals, is willing to have 'both hands quite full of work,' if in its accomplishment that feeling can be indulged.

The real struggle in the battle of life is in the resistance to evil,—resistance in affection, intention, and thought, as well as in word and deed;—for the character is formed less by what we do than by what we refrain from doing; less by doing good than by shunning evil. What we do is the simple expression of what we are. It strengthens the existing state, but effects no other alteration in it. Rejecting evil, on the contrary, in any form, lessens its power; and persistent rejection procures its expulsion. The heart then opens for the reception of heavenly influences, and the affections are elevated and purified.

There is a state in which, while good affections have scarcely come into existence, a desire for their presence is experienced; producing a consciousness of the actual presence of their opposites. We wish not to love certain specific forms of selfishness or worldliness, but are sensible that we do love them. We long to act from pure motives, but know that we do not, and feel that we cannot. Deliverance from this thraldom, when the higher affections have acquired pre-eminence and govern the life, is symbolised by the transformation of the caterpillar into the butterfly.

Pursuing our observations, we remark that the insect's sustaining power is in its wings. Wings are the sole instruments by which it is lifted from the earth; and they correspond to spiritual truths,—the only means of mental elevation. The human will is endowed with a faculty of loving; but is destitute of ability to choose the objects of its affections, and must exercise them according to its inherent tendencies. It has no power by which it can refuse to love congenial objects, or elect to love

others of an opposite character; nor, indeed, to discern the difference in their quality. All power of discernment belongs to the understanding; and it is by the light—the truths—of which it is receptive, that we learn the quality of the affections, and of the objects to which they are devoted. But it does more than this. It shows how the affections can be changed; and reveals laws of life, by obedience to which a readiness to part with the old loves, and a capacity for receiving new ones, are acquired; and then in due time, when the state is mature, He who alone can change the heart operates that change in us. Without spiritual truths, however, to enlighten and guide, invigorate and restrain, this could never be effected; but aided by them we are borne upwards, as the butterfly on its wings.

Meditating on the use and beauty of these important organs, we observe that in those delicate membranes, with their covering of filmy scales that sparkle in the sunshine, all the colour and splendour of the insect reside. Colours are representative of variations and modifications of intelligence and wisdom; and the tints on the butterfly's wing, that attract and delight the eye as it pursues its aerial course, may be taken as symbols of vivid, though transitory perceptions and consequent thoughts that recreate the mind in its happy summer time, when there is sunshine in the heart.

Another notable difference here claims attention,—the improved vision of the soaring, as contrasted with the creeping insect. 'Instead of twelve invisible eyes,' with which the latter is furnished, 'we behold two, very large, and composed of at least twenty thousand convex lenses,

each supposed to be a distinct and effective eye.' This particular is strikingly suggestive of the wonderful increase of perceptive power in the regenerate as compared with the merely natural mind; and which, though very imperfectly developed in the present life, will be fully realised when the material envelope is laid aside. With powers whose extent and perfection can now be only faintly conjectured, the risen spirit looks above, around, and beneath himself, with some discernment of the boundless wealth of particulars which each glance includes. He looks reverently upward through a long perspective of superior excellence, unattained or unattainable, to Him from whom it all descends; around him on others like himself, similar in degree and general experience; on them, and on scenes representative of their common affections and intelligence; below him, on those differently and less nobly organised and endowed, whose colder affections may be kindled by his more perfect love, whose feebler intelligence may be aided by his superior wisdom, and whom he may lead forward in the ever-opening upward path to unapproachable perfection. And the strength and clearness of spiritual vision to which all this lies open are symbolised by the butterfly's twenty thousand effective eyes.

Following the insect in its flight, we perceive that the change in its mode of existence has produced a similar alteration in the nature of its food. The coarser aliment —derived from the green and leafy parts of plants—that nourished its initiatory life is superseded by more delicate nutriment: it feeds on the nectar of flowers, on the juices that nourish the future fruit. In like manner, the state that precedes regeneration, when the outer life is being

reformed and brought into order, is supported by external truths drawn from the letter of the Holy Word, and by goodness of a corresponding low class. Like the Baptist, our meat is locusts and wild honey. But when the new birth is accomplished, the higher life is sustained by the interior truths of the spiritual sense, and by goodness of a similar order; for the truths that lead to goodness having done their work, those which thence originate succeed in their place.

As the particulars that accompany and constitute the metamorphosis continue to engage the eye, we remark that the subject of it is no longer alone and barren, but has celebrated its nuptials, and is preparing for the continuation of its species in a numerous progeny. The union of the two universal principles of goodness and truth in the individual mind is the great characteristic feature of the regenerate state. In this union all human perfection consists—the strength and the peace of the mind;—strength from united effort, peace from unity of purpose. Goodness alone is unable to discover the upward path of life, and equally incapable of pursuing it. Truth alone is cold and hard,—bright, indeed, but unattractive. United—good is vigorous and enlightened by the power and brilliancy of truth; and truth is warmed and softened by the tender impulses of love. It is observable that these heavenly principles, when separately received, appear to lose their heavenly quality, and to cherish a certain degree of mutual disparagement and hostility. Truth seeks to govern according to inflexible laws; despising as weakness the mercy that would convert its rectilinear course into a line of beauty, or rather, into the graceful spiral, ever tending

upwards. On the other hand, natural good—and all good is natural when disjoined from truth—regards the latter as something distasteful and superfluous; and often founds its claim to be, and to be considered good, on its destitution of truth; as if when this, or a regard for it, is absent the presence of goodness followed of necessity. The fact is that neither is truly itself so long as it is separate from the other. They exist as one in their divine Source, and must reunite in the recipient that goodness may be good and truth true. Then only, also, are they productive of real spiritual uses; and the countless eggs of the prolific butterfly represent the multiplication of affections of goodness and perceptions of truth through all the principles and powers of the mind, that results from the accomplishment of this union in its inner recesses.

It has been already observed that the precise correspondence of insect metamorphosis is with the change produced by regeneration. But all general and important changes are made up of particular and lesser ones, that follow the law of the greater, and are symbolised by the same correspondences. Thus, within the wonderful transformation by which from being merely natural we become spiritual, are two special metamorphoses, that affect, one the understanding, and the other the will. By the first of these knowledge is exalted into intelligence; by the second truth is transmuted into good.

There may be large stores of knowledge—accumulations of facts—in the mind, and little intelligence; but there is no intelligence that is not based upon knowledge and fact; as no edifice can be erected without building materials.

Total ignorance, were it possible, would imply total helplessness,—total uselessness, also. To be useful at all, even to be human, something must be known and understood. No kind or degree of knowledge, however humble, is to be despised; while the more varied and the richer our stores, the better are we provided with useful appliances: and his possessions are large indeed who does not daily find himself ignorant of something desirable to be known. The sciences are of the utmost value to man's physical well-being and the foundation of his external interests. In the three kingdoms of nature, animal, vegetable, and mineral; and the various physical forces, such as heat, electricity, magnetism, and others; the bounty of divine Providence has stored the scene of this his first, lowest, and preparatory life with a copious supply of materials adapted to his necessities and advancement; but, to be used, they must be known and understood. Science, however, has nobler ends than material prosperity, or the gratification of the senses. Its successful pursuit, especially in its higher departments, as it requires, so does it form and exercise, some of the finest and highest of the intellectual powers; and it is certain that the acquisition of facts relating to man's natural life and the plane of its activities, in some of the various departments of knowledge, is an indispensable preliminary to the development of his faculties of rationality and intelligence. Even that degree of rationality which from its universality is styled common sense has a similar origin. Knowledge, great or small, is a body of which rational principles and conclusions, broad or narrow, are the soul; or, one is the creeping caterpillar, the other the beautiful, soaring but-

terfly. But it must be remembered that the larva state precedes; for, were there no caterpillars, there could be no butterflies.

But what, in its essence, is this soul of outward knowledge? What are the mental rainbow-tinted butterflies? And, further, is it practicable to obtain any insight into the manner in which they are vivified within us? Only slight hints and faint glimpses of these interior operations are afforded; still, something may be gleaned respecting them.

The various intellectual operations that are usually comprehended in the term *thought* are not self-originated, but are produced by the agency of attendant spirits and angels. Light from the spiritual world—thought from its inhabitants—is continually flowing forth into the understandings of men; but, to be conscious of the presence of light, there must be objects to reflect it; in order to think, there must be the materials of thought,—that mental furniture we call knowledge. And the more extensive and the fuller is this plane of external knowledge, the broader, the deeper is the basis for spiritual influx. All that is effected by mental application, and effort to work out conclusions or arrive at principles, is only to dispose the mind for its reception;—for the reception, that is, of spiritual light. This light is, indeed, modified indefinitely,—coloured, reflected, refracted, variegated, and in part absorbed,—by the different media through which it is conveyed; but it is still light; in its origin light from heaven, and from the sun of heaven itself. Other alterations, too, does it sustain from the ends and aims from which it is sought, and to which it is directed; and could it, like natural

sunshine, be analysed by the application of some spiritual prism, beyond the coloured spectrum heat-rays might be discovered, revealing the quality of their source. Nor is evidence of the truth of this explanation difficult to obtain. For, when the reflective powers are engaged in an effort to solve some difficult problem, the observant mind becomes conscious of a twofold operation. It selects and calls up from the memory such particular facts as relate to the subject of its inquiries; then arranges and ponders over them: and, when the solution sought is obtained, it is so sensible of a descent into them from a higher region, that even to its own perceptions it becomes apparent that thought is not its own, but an extraneous gift. Thus, then, it is that, by the chemistry of the influent light, the soul or essence of the bare facts acquired by the senses is extracted, and raised to a higher level;—our caterpillars are metamorphosed into butterflies.

Bare fact, like faith alone, is barren. The insect feeds voraciously, but merely appropriates and accumulates; it has no useful product and no progeny. So knowledge yields nothing to the higher nature within till the process of sublimation has passed upon it. Then, in its winged condition as rationality and intelligence, it can unite with corresponding good purposes, and become fruitful.

Proceeding further inwards, or upwards, we arrive at the more important translation, not from a lower intellectual plane to a higher, but from the intellect to the will,—the transmutation of truth into good. Here, again, the first state is one of voluntary external acquirement; and the eager interest experienced in the acquisition and apprehension of spiritual truths is most accurately repre-

sented by the caterpillar and its persistent feeding. The attainment of spiritual like that of natural riches may be from impure and selfish motives, and is often largely mingled with them. In themselves, too, they are so far similar, that they are capable of subserving either good or evil purposes, and that their value and quality depend on their application. There is, besides, this further parallel between them, that the happiness or satisfaction derivable from either has no relation to the mere extent of our possessions, but is realised in their use. To none but the basest minds are riches estimable for their own sake. They are sought for the advantages they can purchase; for the *good*—real or supposed—into which they are convertible; and in no other way are they enjoyed. So also, while spiritual treasures exist as mere accumulations in the natural understanding, which amuses itself by contemplating and admiring their beauty, being unemployed, they produce no happiness to the possessor. They, likewise, must be converted into good before they can yield satisfaction to the heart. For instance, how few comparatively of those to whom the truth is familiar that the Lord's divine providence superintends all human events, even the minutest, appear to reap from it the full support it is adapted to afford! This failure to realise so great a benefit is usually ascribed to deficiency of faith, but appears rather to arise from want of love for the ends which the appointments or permissions of Providence are designed to accomplish; or, if due to a defect of faith, it is of the faith of the heart that originates in such love, and not to faith of the intellect. If the heart is set on some earthly good that eludes the grasp, there is little comfort in the

clearest intellectual conviction that, passing by the object of desire, the Lord gives us that which will promote purification from evil and fitness for eternity;—that when we ask for earth He offers heaven. So long as we desire to choose our position in life, to select our path, and guide our steps in agreement with our own will, the knowledge that our heavenly Father is actually doing all this for us, better and more wisely than we can do it for ourselves, is a source of neither rest nor peace. But when the truth is elevated into the affections, and we love the end which He regards, and, like little children clinging to a father's hand, willingly abandon self-dependence to be led by Him alone, the truth is transformed into good, and yields pure consolation, sweet peace, and profound repose.

Our reflections have as yet been limited to the first and last stages of insect life; but between them lies a third;—a state of temporary death. Death also intervenes between the corresponding states in all the degrees through which they have been traced: the death of the mere love of knowledge, of the intellectual love of truth, of the natural selfhood, and, finally, the death of the body. Life is sweet to the little insect, as it feeds on soft vegetable tissues, basking in the sunshine and warm summer air. Dear, too, is the accumulation of varied knowledge from the fertile plains of science and literature; not less attractive are the wide intellectual fields of spiritual truth; dear is the life of the proprium, with all its selfish and worldly ends and aims; while the love of animal life itself is instinctive and ineradicable. But, when the larva state is mature, the insect retires from its life's occupation of eating, and prepares for its approaching metamorphosis. It

first provides a place of sepulture, weaves from its own body a soft, silken shroud, and then, with no consciousness of a higher destiny, and no consoling hopes, calmly surrenders itself to its fate. Throughout the entire series of analogous human transformations a similar surrender of the lower life is indispensable. Its extinction, it is true, must at some time be sustained, and is independent of human will and co-operation. Death, though it does not destroy the natural memory, so closes it, that to its possessor it is as though it were not. All the science and literature of which it is the depositary, all natural acquisitions of every kind, disappear from the sight and consciousness, and become entirely dormant. The interior memory then comes into activity, which is not admissive of natural facts; but registers the ends they were sought for, the uses they were applied to, and the rational principles derived from them. Does it follow from this that natural acquirements have no spiritual use? that there is no relation between the culture of the faculties the divine bounty has bestowed upon us and our state in eternity? Very far from it. The primary, the indispensable qualification for heaven, without which, indeed, all others are nugatory, is a purified will and the reception of affections of goodness from the Lord; but the distinction of 'the wise and simple' there,—that is, of those who can guide and govern, and thus perform important uses, from those who are led and obey, and are limited to mean ones,—rests upon the cultivation of rationality and intelligence as its basis. So, again, spiritual truths in the understanding, that have not been transmuted into goodness by reception in the will, drop off at death like leaves from a tree. All

the worldly advantages and possessions to which the proprium is devoted are lost when the spirit quits the sphere to which they belong: while the death of the body no human skill can prevent or retard. These changes are wholly irrespective of the human will; but the evolution of the higher life from the lower, throughout the series, depends upon the voluntary surrender of the latter: we must lay it down of ourselves.

The entombment in the chrysalis, during which the pupa neither eats nor moves, represents the intervening state of trial and temptation referred to, when the lower delights are relinquished and the higher are not as yet realised. The interior affections then appear paralysed, and there is no conscious reception of inflowing good affections. The sunshine, though never actually withdrawn, is for the time wholly obscured; the singing-birds are mute, and the trees of the garden droop. It is a season of deep spiritual adversity. One function, however, that of respiration, the pupa retains during its suspended animation; and if that be obstructed, absolute death supervenes. Respiration is an exercise of the lungs corresponding to an analogous exercise of the understanding; and, in this instance, appears to indicate the tenacious power of faith in the divine love and protection by which we cling to the promises of Scripture, and are enabled to hold fast to the end,—the end of each specific trial. This arrives sooner or later, according to circumstances. Temperature is the principal agent in determining the period of the insect's imprisonment; and similarly does spiritual temperature determine the duration of the state of temptation. As in nature the extreme depth of

midnight immediately precedes the dawn; so, precisely when the soul's night is darkest and coldest does its day-break commence; and as beneath the sun's risen splendour the butterfly rises from the chrysalis,

'Dipt in the richest tincture of the skies;'

so, when the Sun of Righteousness has risen in the heart, does the liberated spirit emerge from captivity, and soar on expansive wings far above the level of its former activity and enjoyments, discharging higher offices and realising purer delights.

THE GREEN GRASSES.

The Green Grasses.

'The bare earth, till then
Desert and bare, unsightly, unadorn'd,
Brought forth the tender grass, whose verdure clad
Her universal face with pleasant green.'

MILTON.

ONE of our poets incidentally remarks,—

'There are nettles everywhere,
But the smooth green grasses are more common still;

an assertion which observation soon verifies. Wherever there is waste, uncultivated ground, though but the narrowest strip or ledge of unproductive soil, a fertile growth of briars, nettles, and thistles,—of thorny, prickly, or stinging plants, speedily appears; and, if not held in check, so rapidly increases as soon to overpower the harmless and lovely wild flowers that have arisen beside them. But, however abundant this noxious form of vegetation may be, how small a portion of the earth does it occupy in comparison with the undulating downs, the spacious meadow-lands and broad pastures, the commons, parks, and lawns that are overspread with rich carpetings of soft

verdure; where sheep, cattle, and other animals peacefully crop the tender grass; groups of children pursue their various sports; and the footsore wayfarer or tired labourer lies down to rest! The soft green colour of the outstretched plain is also as refreshing to the eye as the grassy couch to the weary limbs; and, though the effect is traceable to a distinct cause, even the spirit feels repose, and, in appearance, imbibes the verdure and inhales the breeze.

The green grasses! There is melody in the very words. The associated recollections and ideas, too, are full of beauty and interest; whether, confining the thoughts to ourselves individually, we look through the reminiscences of past years to childhood and its delight in buttercups and new-mown hay,—gathering many flowers, but caring little for the preservation of any; or, looking abroad and around, include in the survey scenes and objects essential to the general welfare of mankind. In relation to the latter, we pause to consider the interesting circumstance, that on the vegetable covering of the earth the life of man and of the whole animal creation through all its sections is dependent. Of the two great kingdoms into which organic beings are grouped, corresponding to the two great principles that include all spiritual life, the lower is the support of the higher. Not that all animals are vegetable feeders. While many tribes are exclusively herbivorous, others are flesh-feeding, and subsist on those lower than themselves in the scale of being; and some, like man himself, are omnivorous: but vegetation is the original support of all. So far as the order of creation is deducible from the study of rocks containing the oldest known forms of life, it appears

that the lowest in the series of animals was accompanied by the lowest in the series of vegetables ;—by moss, lichen, fungus, alga, or some other humble plant from which it could derive support : for it remains to be demonstrated that any living creature whatever feeds on inorganic matter. To the vegetable kingdom is thus committed the work of solidifying the gases of the ocean and the atmosphere, and of converting the crude minerals of the earth into organic substances. The hundreds of millions of the human family, the incalculably greater numbers of the lower animals, all derive sustenance, directly or indirectly, from some of those vegetable forms that clothe the earth with grace and beauty ;—from root, stem, or branch ; from leaf, flower, or fruit. We usually explain to ourselves the benevolent care and solicitude implied in thus supplying each creature's necessities, by a few brief references to omnipotence, to which we assume everything is easy ; without much consideration of the infinitude of particulars involved in the marvellous and complicated provisions for the support of animal life. We remember, perhaps, the 'mighty arm of the Lord,' but forget the 'work of His fingers.' Yet in this stupendous work, at which in its totality we take an unreflecting glance, there are provisions as numerous as the individual organs of all the creatures for whose benefit they are made, nay, far more numerous ;—wisdom, and what to human apprehension appears like forethought infinite and inexhaustible !

From this slight advertence to the important part sustained by vegetation in the economy of creation, we turn to our special subject—the grasses ; observing that this

useful though lowly form of plant-life is not confined to the material earth; there being grasses, and green ones too, in the minds and lives of men. Let us wander over some field of fresh-springing grass, or recline on a hillock of sweet-scented hay, and endeavour to discover what they are, and how they operate in the mental earth of human minds.

The primary use of the verdant carpet beneath our feet is the support of animals subservient to man for food and other purposes. As subordinate to him, and tributary to his necessities, these animals symbolise principles belonging to the natural as distinguished from the spiritual part of his constitution; that alone being truly man, receptive of goodness and truth, and possessing a capacity for eternal life. Separated by the element they inhabit, as well as by other attributes, from birds and fishes, which as dwelling respectively in air and water typify intellectual principles of different degrees; the general correspondence of quadrupeds is to the voluntary nature,—to the will and its affections; while the particular correspondence of the domestic animals that graze the fields is to the good affections of the natural mind, by which the harmony and well-being of families and communities are maintained or promoted, though possibly with little or no regard to religious obligation. No good affections, however, are indigenous to that mind; for, as to his natural condition, man is more fierce and cruel than the most savage beast; neither can they be supported without suitable nutriment. They are formed and supported by a certain order of truths adapted to sustain them, as the grasses to which they are analogous sustain the animals that feed upon them. To

obtain clearer and more precise ideas, however, the natural objects themselves must be examined, so as to observe the conditions of their existence.

The first particular that then presents itself for consideration is the spontaneity of their growth. None of the ordinary labours of the agriculturist are employed for their cultivation. No human hand prepares the ground, scatters the seed, or waters the thirsty soil. No careful industry removes the weeds that may impede or injure the growing crop. Yet, year by year, when the season arrives, they renew their growth and cover the earth with verdure. The various processes of agriculture by which under ordinary circumstances an average harvest is insured, are strictly analogous to mental processes by which the germination and fructification of spiritual seeds are secured or accelerated; and the labour employed corresponds to voluntary efforts for our own spiritual culture. Thus, thoughtful application of mind, pulpit teaching, the study of the Scriptures and other sources of religious instruction, together with earnest endeavour to become what truth convinces us we ought to be, are all branches of spiritual husbandry. The crops raised are, by the divine blessing, in accordance with the labour bestowed, and are never blighted by the absence of needful rain and sunshine. In contrast with this, the grasses of the field grow up in annual succession without any voluntary preparation and tillage. They appear, therefore, to be types of a species of truth that is imbibed indirectly, involuntarily, and unconsciously; a class of low forms of spiritual life, that, by modes of growth similar to those of their representatives in nature, spring up from the universal diffusion of spiritual

light, heat, and moisture, without application on the part of the recipient.

If the thoughts are directed towards the lower and lowest strata of the social edifice in all countries,—to those large masses of human beings who, correctly or incorrectly, it is usual to distinguish as the labouring classes,—how large an amount of practical truth, simple, indeed, and elementary, but most valuable and important as forming the foundation for religion and morality, may be found extant among them! That it is vague and imperfect cannot be denied; nor that it is often mixed with many and dangerous errors; yet it is sufficiently clear and precise to nourish some of the most necessary social and domestic affections, and respect for the broad distinctions of right and wrong. There is in the great majority of the classes indicated respect for life and property, obedience to the laws, and regard for the charities of home. Now, nothing of this is innate or instinctive to the mind, but is wholly acquired. The question then occurs; How is it acquired, and whence? Not directly from the Holy Word, nor from the pulpit; for, unhappily, the generality of these classes have little reverence for either, and are consequently negligent of both; not even from books of a didactic character; for few of them comparatively read such works, while, with many, to read at all is an unattained accomplishment; not by precept or direct tuition of any kind.

It appears to be gained from mere contact with others; from the circumstance of living in society, sharing its advantages and amenities, and submitting to its restraints; from the general habits and practice of the community at large, which, however low they may actually be, have still

vitality enough to communicate it. It is the circumference of a radiance, originally derived from the Word and the church, reaching by indirect channels multitudes of people by whom both are unknown, or forgotten, or disesteemed. As heat and light diffuse themselves around their centre by means of the atmospheres, so goodness and truth are conveyed by receptive minds till they reach an extreme boundary, where they are lost in ignorance and obscurity. But, though distant, these diffused rays are not severed from their Source ; and the supply is perennial, however it may vary in purity. For the classes referred to, though at the extremity of the social scale, are not cut off from its other members, but are in daily contact with individuals better instructed than themselves, and that more directly from the higher sources of truth. Nor is this general extension of truth and knowledge one of truth and knowledge merely ; but of these as embodied in practice. It is founded on an intercourse not chiefly of words and ideas, but of deeds and just actions ; for large as is the measure of evil in the world it is more than overbalanced by good. Thus justice is learnt by being justly dealt with, and mercy by being treated with tenderness and forbearance. Different grades of men act and react upon each other, and the strong inevitably mould the weak. The predominant qualities of individuals pervade the social atmosphere that surrounds them, and thus establish to some extent a community of spiritual goods ; and, alas ! of evils also. The higher in social position, education, talents, or genuine worth, exercise a powerful influence on those lower than themselves in these particulars, even when this influence is contemned and resisted. The mutual dependence, like-

wise, of all who form part of one community tends powerfully towards the establishment of elements of order. The necessity that each individual should, in some degree, respect the rights, wishes, and feelings of the rest, in order that his own should be respected also, establishes what perhaps is at first only a habit, but is afterwards elevated into a rule, a principle, and an affection.

Home, too, however squalid; its discipline and influence, however defective; contribute largely to the same result; for here the first lessons are learnt, the first affections insinuated. The sphere of innocence surrounding the infant, communicated through celestial angels, is irrespective of social inequalities; and when not otherwise obstructed, is as powerfully operative in the peasant's cabin as in the regal palace; and the affection it inspires, and the tenderness it excites, returned to the child in lavish endearments, form a productive soil in its receptive mind ready for the admission of any stray seeds of truth that the winds of heaven may waft towards it.

It has been remarked that the grasses are among the most common things in existence. Wherever a few grains of earth can lodge, some humble form of plant-life is certain to spring up, to be followed by grass as soon as there is soil enough to support it. An obsolete path or road, any place that busy traffic and the frequent passage of human feet has ceased to harden, rapidly becomes green with this lowly description of vegetation. In fact, it grows wherever care and effort are not used to exclude it. The inference from this universality of growth is, that the analogous principles are as universally present, and not confined to any one class of mankind. No heathen

or savage tribe is so debased but that some imperfect knowledge is possessed of human obligations; some defective ideas of parental and filial duty; some notion of honesty and fidelity to each other, if not to strangers. They are impressions rather than principles; faint, scarce discernible vestiges of an ancient revelation that once trained men for, perhaps, the highest heaven; dim and all but expiring rays of a light that once shed its beams over wide continents, illuminating the whole path of human life. They are now a mere traditionary residue, not of truth, scarcely of approximations to truth; but of perversions in which only a few atoms of truth still remain; yet sufficient to render some rude form of society possible among them.

Nor are the benefits of the spiritual grasses limited to the lower state of society in christian or heathen lands. They form the earliest impressions and feelings of all ranks, from the highest to the lowest. It is not precept in any case, nor in any sphere of life, that forms the early elementary notions of morals;—of right and wrong, liberty and oppression, love and enmity; but practice,—the practice of the home circle in which we are born, of the community in which we live, be it high or low; and the impressions vary according to the purity of the practice that forms them. They are low and mean if that be corrupt, noble and generous if that be liberal and unselfish. Precept consciously learned and reflected on comes much later, and when a receptive soil has been provided for it in the affections; otherwise it would never be received at all, being repelled by inherent tendencies to evil. The imperfect knowledge, the vague sentiments and impressions that have been described, supporting a general though lax re-

gard to justice and rectitude, are, as we apprehend, the principles represented in nature by the grasses.

The grasses, however, have other offices to perform besides that of supporting animal life. They are eminently serviceable in the preservation, by their entangling roots, of thin, loose soil on precipitous slopes, chalky downs or cliffs, and elsewhere; and in binding together the shifting sands thrown up by the restless ocean. Solar action, the attrition of running water, and erosion by the atmosphere, gradually reduce the hardest rock to fragments, which are eventually deposited in the ocean. The chemistry of the great waters partially resolves this deposit into its component elements; while the friction of winds and waves grinds the remainder into dust. By the flux and reflux of the tides this is further pulverised and distributed on the adjacent coasts; whence it would be again dispersed by the winds, and a source of injury and annoyance, but for the agency of simple plants, and of the grasses among them, by which the inconstant, unstable sands are held together till an ampler soil is formed for higher species of vegetation. Then, after ages of vicissitude, what was once barren sand becomes firm, fertile, habitable earth; where timber and fruit-bearing trees bring forth their beneficent products and results; tempering the climate, and affording food and shelter to man and beast;—one instance, this, among thousands, of that wonderful circle of operations which by mutation, dissolution, and reconstruction, secures the preservation and integrity of creation.

Rocks correspond to truth; and sand, which is disintegrated rock, to separate particulars of truth, to mere facts and opinions in the natural understanding, not formed into

principles for the guidance of life; and therefore destitute of coherence and stability, and liable to be scattered abroad by any wind of false doctrine; to be drifted hither and thither by conflicting influences; and capable of application to any system or practice, whether right or wrong. The truths represented by the grasses, though extremely general and rudimentary, preserve the sands of the mind from dispersion, bind them together into principles, and, pertaining as they do to ever-recurring daily duties, their practice constantly repeated, like the annual renewal of the grasses, forms good ground, ultimately receptive of the higher forms of spiritual life.

Not less important to the community than to the individual, the spiritual grasses, by their apparently instinctive action, are among the most efficient forms at work in the conservation of society. However great the amount of popular vice and crime, or the depth of turpitude they involve; however low the standard of morals; the vastly great majority of mankind conduct themselves with order and propriety. Respect for justice and sincerity survives among men who neglect the practice of these virtues, evincing that, at least, an intellectual regard for probity is not quite extinguished; that the 'two witnesses,'—the will and the understanding,—have not yet united their testimony against it. Thorns and thistles are indeed abundant, but 'the green grasses are more common still.' The uniting and restraining power of these internal bonds, far more than that of external laws,—though the latter aid the former as outworks defend the citadel,—holds the communities of the earth together. Without these the laws of the land, penal enactments applied with the utmost

strictness, would be wholly incapable of maintaining order among the scattered inhabitants of provinces far from the seat of government, or the dense populations of great cities; in which hundreds of thousands,—nay, in some instances, millions,—of men live in proximity so close as scarcely to move without jostling. The real governing power is in habits, however imperfect, of obedience and order formed before rules of conduct could be taught or acquired; in an affection for good conduct and just dealing insinuated before the fierce desires and animal passions of the hereditary nature are developed in intensity. These early impressions are thus antecedent to all external law, which without them would be nugatory, destitute of force, if not, indeed, impossible. Laws to enforce moral obligations appeal to this sense of right previously implanted; and owe their efficacy far more to the inward feeling they respond to, than to all the outward machinery of governments: and these impressions and this sense of right are the chief instruments in binding together those jarring interests and elements of the community that would otherwise meet in destructive conflict.

Nor is the retention of the soil on hilly ground, and the hindrance they offer to the dispersion of loose sands, the last of the benefits due to the grasses. By the soft garment they interpose between the sun and earth, they are serviceable in screening the latter from an excessive degree of heat at one time, and in preventing its too rapid radiation at another. They also conduce to the productiveness of the soil, not merely by depositing the elements they have consolidated from air and water, but by retaining moisture, and promoting the deposition of dew.

Equally valuable is the first moral and spiritual vesture which they typify for the protection of the mind from the destructive heat of indwelling corruption and outward allurement. As a rudimentary moral sense, this shelter is interposed between it and the violence of passion and selfish desire. The first assaults of evil are met by something that resists and repels; by a consciousness of wrong in the inducements that are offered, even when there is no clear knowledge why they are so. By preventing instant compliance, it affords time for reflection and the succour of higher principles when any such are present; and if the right triumphs the result is to the mind what another year's growth of grass is to the earth.

In common, too, with every other species of vegetation, the grasses contribute, and from the extent of surface they cover in no unimportant degree, to the purification of the air, and its fitness for human and animal respiration, by the removal of a noxious element, and the disengagement of the gas on which vitality depends. The multitudes of men who live on grass, whose best affections have no higher support than the principles analogous to grass, are yet influential in the preservation of a healthy social atmosphere, from the mere circumstance of their numbers. Each individual in whom they are operative helps by his own life to keep alive the general degree of moral rectitude, and to prevent its deterioration; as the grasses contribute to atmospheric purity, without special effort, by the mere fact of living and growing.

We will now turn our attention to the circumstance that the grasses are green, and to some of the particulars in-

volved in it. To be green, in application to vegetation, distinguishes the healthful and living from the diseased and dying. So long as a plant, or any part of a plant, is in the discharge of its vegetable duty, by absorbing nutriment from earth and air and employing it in its special function, it retains its verdant colour. But when this healthy activity ceases or intermits, the forces of nature commence a destructive action upon its tissues, and change the lovely green to brown, or some colour into which that largely enters. The moment the delicate parallel veins of a blade of grass cease to transmit moisture, and its minute cells to organise another atom from the elements absorbed, decay and death commence. The grasses, indeed, from the comparatively small quantity of moisture they retain, are particularly liable to the rapid operation of the decomposing forces referred to, and they speedily acquire the hue of death. Hence, to say of tree, shrub, or herb, that it is green, is synonymous with declaring it to be alive. This attribute of vitality is the property of the mental grasses: we will consider what it implies.

To be alive is to be held in connection with the Source of life; and this is effected by momentarily receiving the principles that are, so to speak, the constituents of life in Him; and these are love and wisdom united. But continual reception involves proportionate effusion,—the employment of the gifts enjoyed in use for ourselves or others. Subject to activities corresponding to those that operate on the grasses of the field, the grasses of the mind would soon perish were they merely theoretical principles; but being, on the contrary, eminently practical, and kept in circulation as embodied in deeds, they are maintained in freshness by

perpetual use; being thus maintained in connection with their Source. Nothing really good is separate from its Author; and all that initiates human beings into the charities of home and social life, however low in degree or rude in form, is originally derived from Him; and He and His angels are present in it, to give it efficacy and permanence, both in the individual and the community: and permanent goodness in the individual, even in the smallest degree, is eternal life.

All the human race, christian or heathen, civilised or savage, are endowed with immortality and created for happiness in heaven. Yet the vastly great majority appear excluded from the light and knowledge necessary to attain a fitness for eternal life; by which to see the indispensable qualifications and how they are to be acquired. The innumerable gentiles of christendom, and millions of men in pagan lands, never hear the voice of divine truth. The precepts that alone can exalt to a true humanity never reach them. They are ignorant of the Lord both as Creator and Saviour; know nothing of the wonders of redemption and providence; nothing of the nature of their own souls, or the conditions of spiritual life. Not alone the rigid sectarian who measures the divine mercy by the limits of his own narrow creed; but large-hearted, enlightened men have staggered in the effort to solve the problem, how the present life of such can be instrumental in preparing them in any degree for a better state. Those who are indisposed to examine the subject, or to whom it presents itself in vain, may rest satisfied with the general assurance of the infinitude of the divine goodness, and the particular intimation that 'the true Light lighteth every man

that cometh into the world.' Still, if practicable, it is surely desirable to obtain some insight into the method by which the Light operates; so as not simply to accept on authority the truth that all are born for heaven, but to comprehend something of the provisions by which salvation becomes possible for all. Thoughtfully, then, pursuing the inquiry, the suggestion occurs, whether the solution of the difficulty may not be found in the universality of the principles typified by the grasses. They belong to both worlds, the earthly and the heavenly, and therefore tend to their conjunction. They have an inner life through the operations of angels; and an outer life, so as to affect the conscious mind, from the external world and men in the world. And while, as we have seen, they accord with the general life of the community, such as it may be, large or small, rude or refined, barbarous or civilised, they are channels through which spiritual life may reach the lowest who will accept it. Under the most unfavourable conditions of even savage life, they raise their recipients at least one step above the mere animal nature; nurture some weakly good natural affections; and, when so far allowed the ascendency as to introduce some feeble affection of charity into the heart, they confer a capacity for instruction in higher truth, and for the reception of a higher life, after death in the spiritual world. There is intense satisfaction in thus obtaining these few, faint indications of the means by which the poor, destitute, degraded tribes of the earth are gifted with germs of spiritual life, to be developed and expanded to eternity.

The greenness of the grasses, a quality they possess in common with almost the whole vegetable kingdom, is not,

however, confined in its significance to the simple fact of vitality, but has an additional meaning.

The tints of leafage of all kinds, innumerable as they are —though with rare exceptions only variations of the universal green—are in such perfect harmony with the visual faculty, that we are disposed to feel as if it were an impossibility for it to have borne a different hue ;—as if it were green by a necessity as absolute as that fabled by classic antiquity, which was paramount over deity itself. In the perfection of the adaptation to man of the external world, we overlook the infinitude of the love and wisdom that alone could produce it. Yet what a wonderful example is it of the exercise of these divine attributes ! How great a charm, for instance, would be abstracted from our external life were vegetation in general, and the grasses in particular, of any different colour ; were it not all clothed in some one of those exquisitely lovely green tints on which the eye contentedly and unweariedly reposes ! How beautifully they harmonise, or contrast—only another species of harmony—with the blue of the sky, the pearly grey of the mid-day clouds, the splendour of sunset, the golden glory of the ripened corn, the rich brown of the fallow fields, and the brilliant tinctures of the floral world ! For vegetation to be other than green would necessitate a change in the whole organisation and nature of man. Surely, then, among the innumerable causes of thankfulness to the Creator of all the earth, the verdure of vegetation should not be forgotten. Neither should it be allowed to escape recollection that natural benefits so extensive imply corresponding spiritual ones also. We will, therefore, endeavour to obtain some degree of insight into their nature.

Colour is not inherent in natural objects, but is derived from the light of the sun, which endows them with some property existing in itself. If a beam of light is analysed in a prism, it is found to consist of a pencil of coloured rays similar to those of the rainbow; and objects are coloured according to the distinctive capacity of each to reflect, refract, combine, or absorb these rays. Hence colour exists from the influent light as modified by the recipient; and thus both become visible,—the object, and the added gift of colour; though what that colour may be depends on the quality of the former. In the light that dyes the variously-tinted blossoms of our gardens, all its constituent hues are present; yet each flower exhibits only that one, or that combination of colour which is suited to itself.

Similarly do spiritual colours originate in the heavenly sun, and express principles derived from its light. In the spiritual world, as in the natural, the quality of the medium through which light is transmitted, or the reflecting or absorbing power of the ground on which it is received, determines the colour. But the light there is spiritual light; that is, divine wisdom within which is divine love; and the recipient objects are human and angelic minds. The primary spiritual colours are only two, red and white; the former existing from the fire of the heavenly sun, which is essentially divine love; and the latter from its light, essentially divine truth; the derivative colours being formed of various blendings of these, upon what may be pictured as a background of black or shade, of different degrees of density. This shade, in heaven, corresponds to ignorance of proportionate intensity;—ignorance that neither

reflects, nor refracts, nor transmits in any way, but simply absorbs the light. For what is received has always a definite relation to what is previously possessed; and there must be some foundation of knowledge before any truth can penetrate the mind. As not the brightest sunshine can produce prismatic rays on an unpolished black substance, neither can perceptions of truth illuminate utter ignorance. Warm colours, in which red predominates, have a more immediate relation to love or goodness; while cold ones, formed by a converse arrangement chiefly from white, relate more directly to truth. Both elements, however, enter into all; and hence the general correspondence of colours is, to the indefinite variations of wisdom and intelligence which irradiate human and angelic minds;—wisdom and intelligence that originate in divine light, but are variously modified and limited by the peculiar quality as to goodness of each recipient mind, and the density of the shade prevailing in it. To the latter class of cool colours belongs the one that particularly interests us at the present time,—the green. This colour is formed, spiritually, by a large admixture of black or shade, and thence corresponds to truth dimmed, darkened, or obscured by ignorance and error. The composition of the various dyes from red and white as primaries, is a subject of considerable intricacy, and is, consequently, difficult to handle. Nothing more is, therefore, here attempted than a slight summary of particulars from the Writings of the New Church; but it will, perhaps, be found sufficient to enable us to see why the grasses are green.

Truth neither is, nor can be, presented to man in its original purity and simplicity; being in that state as little

suited to his understanding as the intensest solar light to his eye,—utterly incomprehensible and ineffable, 'dark from excess of light.' To bring it within the range of his faculties it is conveyed through angelic and human media, who, as they successively receive and transmit it, invest it in appearances derived from their different modes of perception and apprehension; till at length it reaches him densely veiled, with its original brightness concealed and obscured; but also accommodated to his measure of intelligence, and adapted to his use. This quality of perfect adaptation to low states of darkness and debasement is eminently characteristic of the class of truths symbolised by the grasses; and is expressed and exhibited to the eye in their verdant colour. They offer themselves to minds overclouded by dense ignorance, as well as by the mists and shadows of evil dispositions and habits. But they come to man in a vesture borrowed from his own evil, error, and infirmity; and, being thus accommodated to his state, whatever that may be, they do not repel him by an aspect of purity beyond his reach, nor induce doubt by exciting hostility. On the contrary, the spirit rests on them as on the firm, grass-grown earth. This accommodation to the mind is as complete as that of green to the eye, which is always felt as agreeable, unless the latter is so diseased as to require the total exclusion of light. Hence there is nothing dazzling in them or stimulating; nothing that invites to speculation. They are suitable to the wants of home, to the exigencies of out-door occupation, to the daily intercourse of men; and they appear to be all this by a necessity as inevitable as that by which, as we assume, the grasses are green. Humble rudiments,

as they are, of spiritual life that spring up we know not how; yet, when deliberately accepted in a state of higher intelligence—here or hereafter—as something loved and freely chosen, they open the heart to the highest bliss the individual is capable of experiencing.

The sweet, soft, fresh green grasses! How grateful are they to every sense, as the tired wanderer strays by the river's brink, or lies down to rest beneath the foliage of a sheltering tree, seeking rest and refreshment! So, also, in the spiritual journey, when heart and hope almost fail, and doubt overshadows all higher truth; we rest on these simple, lowly principles that are interwoven with the very substance of our lives, and, consequently, are never overclouded by uncertainty; feeling that to be faithful, just, and true must still be right and good, though there were no heaven above us, and no hereafter. And when the doubt and fear have passed away, we resume our burden, and proceed on our journey strengthened and refreshed, and thankful to the Source of good for the green grasses.

EVENING AND MORNING TWILIGHT.

Evening and Morning Twilight.

'Overhead
The lights of sunset and of sunrise mix'd
In that brief night; the summer night, that paus'd
Among her stars.'

TENNYSON.

THERE are certain natural phenomena, involving important benefits to man, that to his feeble apprehensions appear, on the first view, less as specially designed, than as arising out of provisions made to accomplish other ends. Such an idea is undoubtedly fallacious and imaginative, and is derived from the narrowness of our conceptions; it being impossible to suppose there is anything in creation that is undesigned and merely incidental. Still it affects the mind with a certain innocent pleasure, similar to that arising from the discovery, in our own works, of some additional and unexpected application of contrivances intended to subserve a different purpose. To such superficial observers as the majority of us are, it would, for instance, appear that the first and obvious reason of the existence of an atmosphere around the earth is its necessity as the medium of respiration for the living creatures that inhabit it; yet, with the wonderful

simplicity that ever distinguishes divine creative wisdom, many other beneficial provisions, as essential to human life as respiration itself, are effected by means of this encompassing aerial sphere. The fluid of which it consists is elastic and, in common with other forms of matter, ponderable. It follows thence that, the lower strata being pressed upon by the higher, its density gradually decreases from its base in contact with the earth, to the upper limit where it terminates. From other results of the presence of an atmosphere, and the particulars of its constitution just glanced at, some of the beautiful, and in many ways affecting phenomena of the declining and opening day, are selected as subjects of inquiry and reflection.

In all parts of the globe except the equatorial regions, where the interchange of night and day takes place almost suddenly, there is a period of gradual decline in the one, and of advance in the other, which is distinguished as evening and morning, each with its accompanying twilight. To these periods belong the splendour of the setting and of the rising sun; and, following the effulgence of the former and preceding that of the latter, the lovely violet and diffused golden tints that speak to the heart as well as to the senses; like the utterances of a sweet voice, whose tone affects though the words are undistinguishable. These beautiful accessories of dying and reviving day, breathing respectively a soft sadness and a tender joy and hope, owe their existence to the simple circumstance that as—in ordinary phraseology, the sun sinks below the earth, or—in accordance with strict fact, as the earth turns away from the sun, the slant rays of the luminary in passing through the atmosphere, are refracted or inclined from

their direct course so as to reach the earth, instead of passing into space beyond it; as would happen were there no atmosphere, or were it differently constituted. Arising from similar causes, the effects of evening and morning twilight are similar; except, indeed, that they appear in an inverse order, and in a few particulars occasioned by this inversion. Evening twilight follows the radiance and warmth of day and the activities due to their operations on the earth. Morning twilight follows a state of comparative cold and darkness during which these activities are suspended; and these differences indicate an equal divergence in the correspondences and associations in which both periods are rich. One of the most obvious of these correspondences—full of interest, and likewise inclusive of all the others—is with the alternations of state that belong to the spiritual life, and by which it advances towards maturity.

Alternation of state is the necessary condition of finite existence, which has no life in itself, or of its own, but is perpetually supplied from an extraneous source. The solid earth turns from and towards its parent luminary at regular intervals; and thus produces grateful variety, and shelters itself from the continuous heat that otherwise would prove destructive. The means of support are furnished for all the creatures upon its surface, but they have to seek or apply them; the work of appropriation and assimilation follows; and the cycle of operations closes in rest and sleep. This is the law of animal life, whether of man or brute. A similar law governs rational life, which also is fed, assimilates its food, and takes repose. It extends, likewise, to the natural life of the external mind,

and to the spiritual life of the internal. Nor are angels exempt from the same inevitable necessity of expenditure and recruital. This condition of existence is, besides, that of progress, which is never an uninterrupted advance, but a series of ascents and descents, with something gained at each alternate rise and fall; as the tidal wave falls back after each wild rush of waters, yet gradually gains upon the shore. This law, as already noticed, prevails throughout the universe of both mind and matter; yet with this distinction, that in all existence above the mere animal plane, another element is included in the cycle,—the application of the life continually renewed to some use outside its recipient; every one living for ends beyond himself. Or, possibly, a deeper insight may annul this distinction, and establish a uniformity pervading creation in this, as in so much besides. The wood of a tree, its bark, leaves, fruit, and various secretions, while serviceable to man, are all necessary to the tree itself, and produced in the effort to attain its vegetable perfection. The animal products, equally essential to him, are similarly needed and provided for the individual animal's health and comfort. Hence, then, it would appear that, like man himself, the inferior creatures yield their highest use to other beings in the process by which they complete themselves. So wonderful is the constitution and harmonious relation of all created existence.

It does not at first appear why spiritual progress should not be continuous, like the uninterrupted flow of a perennial stream; why, when some degree of love and light has been attained, it need ever decline into cold and darkness; why, after each advance there should be a

pause, and an apparent, if not a real retrogression. If these alternations took place only during the process of regeneration on earth, they might find an explanation in the necessity of combating distinct evils in succession; and in the unavoidable result of as frequent transition from labour and conflict to rest. But when we remember that they are features even of angelic life, the solution must probably be sought in the inevitable imperfections of finite existence. Mutation marks the creature. Only One, who is life in Himself, is unchangeable and 'without shadow of turning;' only One, who 'neither slumbers nor sleeps,' is 'the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever.' The conditions of being, however, in every degree of it, are the elements out of which its perfection and happiness are to be wrought.

Vicissitude is a proverbial characteristic of human experience. Joy and sorrow, gain and loss, health and sickness, or some interchange of prosperity and adversity, are almost inseparable from it. These changes, though often coincident with such as belong to the spiritual life, and not always easily to be discriminated from them, are yet from a totally different origin, and adhere to the merely natural life. The joy and gain, the sorrow and loss, are alike confined to the external mind; the health and sickness to the bodily frame; and they fall to the lot of the religious and the irreligious; to those in whom the spiritual degree is opened, and those in whom it is closed, without distinction. But the alternations symbolised by the twilight of evening and the dawn of day imply a duality in the mind that does not exist till the internal man is so far developed, as to have an experience of his own distinct from that of the external.

As all the changes incident to the earth in regard to times of the day and seasons of the year result from its position in relation to the sun, so the corresponding changes experienced by the spirit are induced by its attitude towards the Lord; whether, like the earth in the evening, it turns away from the centre of life; or, as in the morning, looks and leans more and more towards it. Until the sun approaches the horizon, there is little diminution of its light; nor, indeed, from its retention by the earth, of its heat either. Yet there is, in relation to the former, a lengthening of the shadows, till, at the actual sunset, they merge in the general obscurity; and an absence in the latter of the sweet freshness of the early day. This may be ascribed to the long-continued action of the sun's rays on the earth itself, on the animals that live upon it, and its vegetable covering. The earth faints beneath the solar fervour, and sullies the purity of its beams by mixing with them its own exhalations. Though the earth in its daily rotation thus turns away from the sun, this is not to be regarded as typical of a disorderly state; it being an absolute necessity, not only for protection from an intense heat beyond its capacity to endure, and continue habitable; but also that each part of its surface may duly present itself to receive the illuminating and fructifying rays. The corresponding states of spiritual morning and evening, of similar necessity to truly human progress, are frequently referred to in Scripture under the figures of 'going out and coming in' under the divine auspices; and the Lord intimates that in each exercise 'His sheep' shall 'find pasture.' The spirit goes out, or descends into the external mind, when its concerns are predominant and wholly engage its attention;

while heavenly things and the interests of the internal mind retire from conscious thought. Conversely, the spirit comes in when it rises from worldly affections and pursuits, and presents itself before the heavenly Father to be enlightened and purified—to receive love and wisdom from Him. In these morning states the spirit holds voluntary communion with Him; feels His presence more or less intimately; is conscious of an elevation of the affections towards Him;—seeking to know and desiring to do His will. Thus the inner man is fed with the bread of heaven. But it does not become our own, part of ourselves, and a permanent possession, till it has been appropriated and assimilated, by being brought down and brought forth in our engagements and life in the world; when the words and actions of the external mind become a transcript of the thoughts and affections of the internal. In strict analogy with this is the introduction into the system of natural aliment, which does not become part of the body till it has been digested and converted into its various components—into actual flesh and blood.

In an orderly progression, it is possible that these changes might succeed each other with a regularity approaching that of the recurrence of morning and evening in nature; and though the strictly analogical states are not governed by time, and have no relation to it, yet, there is a sort of imitative correspondence in the diurnal motion and the day's experience. With the opening of each day the christian turns towards the Lord, to receive love and light from Him through His word, and by the aspiration of the heart in prayer; and then descends into his worldly duties and engagements, to realise in them

the heavenly principles for which he has petitioned. But the exact correspondence of morning and evening is with the more general and important transitions that embrace many of these lesser alternations; and that, unlike them, are not determined by conscious volition. They are common to good men and angels; though by the former they are seldom recognised or understood, even when experienced: human perceptions of spiritual operations being dulled by the envelope of clay and the gross sphere it inhabits. We usually resort to illustrations drawn from the earthly life for aid in comprehending that of heaven—interpreting the higher by the lower. On the present occasion, possibly, it may be useful conversely to seek an explanation of our human states, of which we know so little, by reference to those of angels, that not only follow a more perfect order, but of which distinct information is on record.

It is not unusual to think of heaven as an unvaried scene of felicity, which though capable of increase can never suffer diminution. An emotion of surprise is therefore excited, when the intimation is first received that angelic life admits of alternations comparable to the change from morning to evening; including the spiritual realisation of the crescent beauty and freshness of the one, and of the decreasing light and warmth of the other, with its concurrent 'sadness.' We have, perhaps, in some respects, if not too exalted an idea of angelic perfection, yet one that is not sufficiently discriminative. While we accept without hesitation the assurance that angels were once men like us—are so at the present moment, and ever will be—it may be questionable whether we do not sometimes

fail to recognise the conditions of finiteness, and the identity of nature, that the fact involves. That angels are still men implies, in the first instance, the expenditure and recruit of all their powers, from inmost to outmost;—the recruit being with them as urgent a necessity as with us. Expended power requires for its renewal rest, also, as well as nutriment. Hence, all creatures take the food that is adapted to them—natural or spiritual—and sleep. Hence, also, the vicissitudes of day and night; or, in the heavenly world, of the prolonged evening and morning twilight which meet, as on some parts of the earth at midsummer, without the intervention of any real night. The necessity for variety, likewise, is as great in the inner as in the outer sphere—in the angel as in the man—to keep life fresh and vivid. Not low delights alone become stale and flavourless by too frequent repetition: the higher also by long unvaried continuance produce satiety instead of satisfaction. Gentle vicissitude—the interchange of labour and rest, duty and recreation, the higher delights of the internal mind and the lower pleasures of the external—preserves the charm of existence. Nor is varied experience more needful to preserve the relish of life, than for a just appreciation of its advantages. Human judgments—of mortals and immortals—are not absolute but comparative. Natural conditions are estimated by the relation they bear to other conditions. Wealth and poverty are wholly relative; so are knowledge and ignorance: and, in the same manner, a just estimate of the multifold states of spiritual and angelic life is obtained by comparison with other states that have become known by an actual ascent or descent into them. Angels, retaining as they do the entire human

constitution except the material body; being simply good men and women; have not only an internal but, also, an external mind which desires and seeks its appropriate gratifications: not indeed, like Cæsar, by an imperial 'decree,' but with submissive yearning; like a child soliciting his hour of play, or a servant his permitted holiday. The evils, too, of this mind are not extirpated, but only removed from its central to its outmost region; where, operating through the good that has been freely appropriated on earth, the Lord holds them in restraint and quiescence. Like those of good men on earth, also, their states are progressive; and, as we have seen, progression implies alternation. They are advancing in goodness, and the advance is effected, as in spiritual progress on earth, by the assimilation in the external mind of the love and wisdom received by the internal. For this, the descent into the external mind, and the external life of heaven, its duties, activities, and delights, affords the suitable opportunity. This descent corresponds to evening and twilight; the dawn and morning correspond to the state of interior elevation, when the angel looks towards the Lord to be filled with life from Him.

It is a noticeable fact, and one significant of the tenor of our lives, that the tender beauty of the opening day is seen by but few, and that at wide intervals: chiefly by the traveller, abroad early for business, pleasure, or necessity; and by the patient watcher beside the couch of pain, who lost in deeper interests is scarcely sensible of its charm. Some, perhaps, rising from a sleepless pillow and looking out listlessly on the blue-grey light that fills the air; or later on the pale liquid amber that bathes the

sky set with silver stars, are surprised and startled at beholding for the first time the loveliness of daybreak. The majority form their ideas of it more from painters and poets than from personal observation, and regale the imagination with pictures drawn by others, with pen or pencil, instead of gratifying it by actual vision of their own. The later, though still early, morning hours when the sun has risen, we are possibly better acquainted with ; and know from experience that

> 'Sweet is the breath of morn, her rising sweet,
> With charm of earliest birds ; pleasant the sun,
> When first on this delightful land he spreads
> His orient beams, on herb, tree, fruit, and flower,
> Glistering with dew.'

Swedenborg has a charming passage on these early hours and their tender adjuncts. Writing of peace in heaven, and as if under its influence, he says : 'This peace may be compared to the morning or dawn in the season of spring ; at which time, the night being ended, and the sun rising, all the productions of the earth begin to live anew ; the scent of the flowers, sprinkled with the dew which descends from heaven, is spread abroad ; and, through the medium of the vernal temperature, fertility is imparted to the soil, and a serene pleasure is diffused through the human mind : all which effects take place because the morning or dawn, in the season of spring, corresponds to the state of peace of the angels in heaven.'

These natural images represent to us, as in a dim and distant mirror, the highest and holiest state of the angelic life ;—these and a few other symbols, and, it may be, some faint experience in our hearts, are all from which any idea

can be gleaned of its nature or its blessedness. To the dweller upon earth, we are informed, it is indescribable in words and inconceivable in thought;—above every sense, perception, and idea. Its inmost elements are innocence and peace;—innocence, the origin of all good, and peace, the origin of its concomitant beatitude: innocence that desires to have nothing of its own, but trusts confidingly in the heavenly Father's love and mercy to His children; that feels no care, for He provides; that has no fear, for He protects; that sees no danger, for He defends; that knows no weakness, for He is strong; that rests satisfied with present possessions and enjoyments, feeling them all-sufficient: and peace that breathes its ineffable sweetness throughout the entire being, from inmost to outmost. This state, however, cannot continue without fluctuation; and, as already hinted, they fall into error who suppose that even an angel's existence can be one unintermitting spring morning,—as that period has been interpreted for us. Different from this, the rapt elevation of his interior faculties continues only so long as he is competent to sustain it. As it fails he gradually sinks into his external mind; and engages in occupations of use and recreation similar, that is, corresponding, to those he loved to exercise in the world. Borne down by the weight of his still adherent proprium, he sinks into external though still innocent delights; till, the needful refreshment having been obtained, and the use of the descent accomplished, he awakens to a sense of the comparative inferiority of the pursuits that detain him from his interior blessedness. Then begins his state of 'sadness,' accompanied by an intense longing for the return of a new morning of light

and love;—a renewed experience of the divine presence and blessing. When the state is mature, and he is humbled under a revived consciousness that what he is of himself, and has of his own, is mere evil and nothingness, he is prepared for a new day, which then shortly begins to dawn.

If, recollecting why we sought some knowledge of angelic experience, we proceed to compare it with our own, little resemblance is discoverable. So far from being able to discriminate accurately what belongs to the internal, or to the external mind, it may become questionable whether the internal mind is in any degree developed or even opened within us. Principles, thoughts, and feelings properly belonging, respectively, to these two distinct regions of our nature, instead of being separately arranged, seem mixed together in confusion. Reversing the order which prescribes that natural things should be loved spiritually,—for spiritual ends and uses; we often appear to love spiritual things naturally,—for natural ends and purposes. Selfish feelings mingle with our higher affections, and assert an influence in our best deeds and states. Our understandings are clouded with doubts; and self-condemnatory feelings afflict us even when sincere and earnest effort is exerted to conform to the divine will. We, thus, know little of our spiritual life, and are ignorant of its age: cannot number its years even,—its longer and broader stages,—much less count up its days. Nay, it seems scarcely separable into days. Long, dark evenings of devotion to merely external pursuits are sufficiently obvious: but where are the mornings? And, if any are observable, how short they are, how little warmth and brilliance do they possess! We clearly cannot in-

terpret our experience; and the inquiry suggests itself: Is it wise to attempt its interpretation? The gospel precepts are as obligatory spiritually as naturally; and if we are forbidden to take 'thought for the morrow,' why be curious to note its approach? When we cannot 'add one cubit to our stature,' why be eager to measure it? He who feeds our sparrows is certainly not unmindful of the *man* that is growing up within us; and that will not grow the better or the quicker for anxious thought of ours. We may safely leave ourselves in His care not less as regards heaven than earth. He supports both; and will, besides, 'teach us to number our days' when the knowledge will be salutary.

In discussing the phenomena of twilight, the splendour and wealth of colour that frequently accompany it may not be passed unnoticed; though the subject is too difficult to be treated satisfactorily, or in detail. As with the rainbow, and all other exhibitions of colour in nature, the hues of twilight, glowing and gorgeous, or soft and tender, have a twofold origin—the sun and the earth. All the light and the forces it contains are from the sun; while the colours exhibited are produced by modifications of this light by the reflecting and refracting power of the atmosphere; of the clouds that float in it, and other vapours not condensed into clouds. These all make a one with the earth, and accord with its attitude of reception. The clouds and vapours are composed of water in an extremely attenuated form: and it is owing to the presence of moisture in the air that the influence of the great luminary himself is not destructive instead of beneficent. For, by its agency, the

heat of the sun is both tempered and retained: tempered, so that the earth is not utterly scorched by the fervour of its direct rays when turned towards it; and retained, that it be not frozen by the intense cold of space when turned away. As the earth is thus protected by an atmosphere, derived from itself by the action of the solar forces; so is each human spirit protected, by the sphere of his own life, from an influx of love and wisdom beyond his capacity of reception. As, too, the atmosphere is the means of conveying the solar influences to the earth in a manner adapted to it; so is this human atmosphere the medium through which the life-giving influences of the heavenly sun reach and operate upon us. With a bad man this surrounding sphere consists of evil and falsity, which exclude the light of truth as a dense cloud excludes the sunshine. With one who is being regenerated it is purer, rarer, more pervious; being modified and attenuated by the goodness and truth that he loves, lives, and makes his own; and through it continual accessions of these living principles are communicated to him. Of the intelligence and wisdom thus given and received the splendour of evening, and the purer hues of morning, are the natural types. We cannot discriminate the quality, degree, and measure of these gifts, as thus represented by the different tinctures of the skies; nor interpret the purple and crimson, the scarlet and gold, the violet and green there displayed. Only a few very general ideas are attainable. Each colour, and the gradations and combinations it is susceptible of, correspond to some heavenly gift of love and light as modified by the recipient minds of angels, and of men who are preparing to become angels. Little more than this can at present be discerned.

But little is as yet understood of the composition of natural colours; still less of that of spiritual ones and their correspondences. Undoubtedly, our individual skies, clouds, and rainbows must be more vivid and translucent before we can so interpret those of nature as to read the lessons of wisdom they contain. The glowing skies are pages written, and pictures painted by the solar beams; and they involve science and art to us incomprehensible and unapproachable. We may wonder and admire, but we fail to understand their meaning.

Allusion has been made to the elongation of the shadows when the sun is low; our figures being lengthened as we walk till human proportions are destroyed. We will pause to consider them. Possibly they may reveal their meaning when interrogated.

Shadows in nature are produced by the exclusion of light, by some opaque object, from a certain portion of space which hence assumes a more or less distorted likeness of the object itself. It is a common observation, and not an untrue one, that 'the brighter the light the darker the shadow.' Yet the shadows on bright moonlit nights are intensely black, so that nothing of the structure of the space on which they fall is discernible; while those from sunshine, which is incomparably brighter than moonlight, reveal all the particulars of their surface. The reason of this is, that in the day, in addition to the direct sun-rays, there exists the diffused light, resulting from their reflection and dispersion in every direction by the minute particles of the atmosphere, which we call daylight. The moon's rays are, it is true, similarly diffused; yet, as it

shines only by reflected light, its intensity is too much diminished to produce similar effects. Shadows picture to us the quality of our conceptions of divine and heavenly things; which are but dim and inadequate, even when not distorted images of them; only appearances that indicate them as a shadow the object that casts it. Nor can it be otherwise. The realities themselves belong to another sphere, lighted by another sun; and it is only by representative images they can become apprehensible to us. Even angels see but appearances of truth; though these are laid aside in succession for others that are brighter and truer—nearer to the absolute truth itself. Our experience, too, in this is similar to theirs. Our conceptions of any truth, or any duty, when it is first brought within the range of thought and action, are extremely defective. Gradually, however, it opens and expands, revealing unsuspected particulars and applications that, as it were, translates it to a higher plane. The obscurity and misconception that disguise and distort, as well as darken the truth, are derived from ourselves, our evils and imperfections; but the spiritual shadows decrease in density as the whole mental range is illuminated and purified; as the particulars concealed by their natural types become visible according to the brilliancy of the daylight.

While in regard to density there is no difference between morning and evening shadows, there is a remarkable one in the direction in which they lie; those of morning falling towards the west, and those of evening towards the east. This circumstance presents an obvious instance of the operation of the law that arranges details in agreement with the general fact, state, or phenomenon in which they

are included; so that, with a variety peculiar to itself, the lesser always reflects the greater; and that in relation to both worlds—of matter and of spirit. Thus, the diverging shadows again represent to us the divergent states corresponding to morning and evening, though with specific differences: the general correspondence of the east being with the heavenly affections of the internal mind; that of the west with the natural affections of the external. The predominant affection, whatever its quality may be, throws its clear, strong light over all that is in harmony with itself, lighting up the means for its realisation; which, under its influence, are eagerly sought and easily understood; while impeding difficulties melt away like mists before the rising sun. The objects of its devotion constantly occupy the thought; being present in an under-current even when the mind is otherwise engaged. Thought, too, when suitable opportunity occurs, flows into speech; for it is 'out of the abundance of the heart that the mouth speaketh.' But everything not accordant with this love fades from the sphere of vision or retreats to its circumference, where it lies in shade, unseen and unnoticed. The westerly shadows which leave the east open to the sun clearly symbolise the state when heavenly affections are pre-eminent; when the heart warms to what is pure and holy, and aspires after goodness as the true end of existence. Spiritual truths are then easy of acquisition, and appear to unfold in the mind as flowers expand in the sunshine; while shadows fall over and obscure inferior and temporal concerns. The overshadowing of the east, on the contrary, when its blooming gardens and fruitful fields lie hidden from view, denotes the ascendency of the natural

affections, when temporal interests stand out in strong relief, and become objects of eager pursuit. But though the principles of the internal mind may be withdrawn from conscious thought, they are still interiorly present in the operations of the external, in the under-current already referred to. Nay, more than this; when fully established, so as to make one with the life itself, they acquire the force of a spiritual instinct; so that the mind recoils from opposite evils as things abhorrent to its nature; and rejects them instantly if proposed for adoption.

As morning advances and expands into day, so, in nature, the shades of evening deepen into night. This increasing obscurity is no longer significant of a healthful interest in outward duties and innocent relaxations, but of an immersion in temporal pursuits; when the things of time and sense engross both thought and regard, and the love of all higher good is expiring;—the sun below the horizon and twilight nearly ended. Often, too, is it wholly extinguished in human hearts, leaving only the black midnight to which no day succeeds. This deplorable termination does not, however, arrive in the alternations under consideration: for, when the warm light is all but extinguished, gradually the stars appear; first those of greater, then such as are of lesser magnitude; followed by the crescent, or, perhaps, the full-orbed moon. At this crisis some provided or permitted event recalls the knowledge of truth deposited in the memory, and the pale light of intellectual faith and conviction. These lesser lights, which are appointed to 'rule the night,' suffice to prevent the incidence of total darkness and absolute cold: for it has been demonstrated that there is a measurable,

though most minute, quantity of heat in the moon's rays. The mind first looks up from its low, sensuous plane; and then, admonished and instructed, turns to the Source of life, as the earth to the sun; and the dawn of another day begins.

Thus, life advances day by day; and days are gathered into weeks, with Sabbath intervals between; and weeks into years, till their number is completed and eternity begins.

SPARROWS AND SKYLARKS.

Sparrows and Skylarks.

'The sparrows chirped as if they still were proud
Their race in Holy Writ should mentioned be.'
LONGFELLOW.

'Come thou sky-climbing bird, wakener of morn!
Who springest like a thought unto the sun,
And from his golden floods dost gather wealth.'
PROCTOR.

MINUTE philosophers and careful observers have given us many delightful pictures of the modes of life of the smaller animals; and, in particular, of the habits, and what it may be allowable to call the manners, of the feathered tenants of the air. There is a charm in these sportive creatures, whether of sweet song or bright wing, to which few persons are insensible; and a peculiar interest is attached to such as belong to our own locality, and are, consequently, the most familiar to us. The inhabitants of large cities, indeed, find their sympathies limited to few individuals as well as species; yet some variety of our winged favourites still lingers among us even in London. Skylarks, swallows, starlings, robins, and sparrows may still be seen; some occasionally, others frequently, and the last mentioned commonly, in all but the closest and most populous neighbourhoods.

That man is a microcosm is an expression frequently adopted; but sometimes, possibly, without serious conviction of the truth it conveys, that every object and operation of the world without us corresponds to something existing and operating within us: and it may enlarge and give distinctness to our apprehensions of the subject, if—selecting only one department of nature—we reflect that the whole animal kingdom has as real an existence within our minds as in the world around us. As a whole it corresponds to the aggregate of powers and faculties, including the various modes and forms in which they are manifested, that constitute our common humanity, and exist in every man; while each distinct species represents some distinct human attribute, in the exact and appropriate form in which it would appear, if separated from the indefinite variety of other qualities that compose us. Indeed, it actually is some one attribute thus isolated, and distinctly presented to the mind and eye. That the sloth, the fox, and the tiger exist in human nature is well known; but, possibly, the fact is not so fully recognised that antitypes of the whole animal creation may there be found, and in each individual. Yet, beast, bird, reptile, fish, and insect, in all their varieties, down to the most insensible zoophyte, and the lowest animalcule;—each shadows forth something in man; and exists outwardly and naturally only because it exists inwardly and spiritually. Many of these, belonging to his perverted life, are, alas! not difficult to discover and identify; but others elude our search, and are mercifully restrained from disclosure till we are strong enough to combat and subdue them. And were we permitted to discern them sooner,

either in our own hearts or those of others, the result would be despair of ourselves and contempt of our brethren. Happily, however, it is not the fierce, predatory, and noxious tribes alone that have a residence within us, but the gentle and the useful also; the lamb and antelope as well as the wolf and panther, the dove as well as the vulture. And they issue from their retreats, and tenant our human plains and groves, and sport and carol around us, as soon as they can there find pasture and security.

Birds of all kinds, from the magnificent albatross that sweeps in wide circles over the Southern Ocean, to the minute humming-bird flitting like a winged gem through tropical forests, correspond to the intellectual and rational faculties, or something related to them and their various modes of existence and activity in the mind;—thus to perceptions, ideas, thoughts, reflections, reasonings, and conclusions. Many particulars in the structure and habits of birds that make part of our familiar knowledge, illustrate this correspondence. One of the most remarkable of these, forming the obvious characteristic of the entire class, is the power they possess of rising above the earth and moving through the air. To this their peculiar form, from the pointed beak to the tapering tail, including the expansive wing, is adapted: and their whole organisation, which permits the diffusion of air through the body; and the feathery covering that retains it around them, are adjusted to facilitate and accelerate motion. They are thus capable of soaring to great altitudes, and of sustained flight over immense distances: and by an exact analogy, the intellectual faculties also are capacitated for elevation above material things; can wing their flight over wide

realms of thought, with a rapidity not measurable by time: and thus obtain those comprehensive views of deep human interests, and just ideas of the subjects they embrace, which are only possible to the mind as it rises above them. Their acuteness of vision, too, enabling them to discern objects at distances that render them invisible to man, at once suggests that faculty of perceiving and discriminating which is the special property of the understanding. Another example may be found in their ready response to the operation of light, awaking to activity at the earliest dawn, and roosting when the day begins to close; for, in like manner, is truth—that superior light—essential to all healthy intellectual exercise.

From the immense variety of these winged symbols of certain elements and operations of humanity, two species—the sparrow and the skylark—are selected for observation.

However dissimilar sparrows and skylarks may be to popular apprehension, they are classed by naturalists in one family, which also includes other groups of small birds. Having many features and habits in common, they may all be expected to bear one general correspondence, though with specific differences: and, if the temerity may be pardoned that ventures on a distribution not sanctioned by ornithologists, we would assign to these two respectively the lowest and the highest place in the series. This general correspondence appears to be to a distinct order of thought.

Thought may be distinguished into the voluntary and the involuntary. Voluntary thought is obviously that which is engaged in deliberately and with a definite purpose: as when the mind is intent upon discovering the means to accomplish a desired end; or devotes itself to the investiga-

tion of some object of research, or to any contemplations or speculations that are the result of self-determination, and to which it is freely surrendered. The term voluntary does not therefore indicate a power of originating thought, or of determining its character, for this we do not possess. All thought is influent from spiritual associates, through the affections; and we must of necessity think according to this influence; though with the ability to cherish and develope, or to stifle and reject, the ideas suggested. Involuntary thought, on the contrary, is that which comes unsought and unbidden; nay, often unnoticed, unless the mind has been accustomed to observe its own operations. There is, however, a kind of unbidden and undesired thought which finds its visible expression in a very different correspondence. Such, for instance, as those streams of painful suggestions and ideas that in seasons of temptation or infestation inundate the mind, and carry it forcibly along in their current, as a torrent carries with it the physical objects that lie in its path; and which, though resisted, return again and again with an all but overwhelming force. The description of thought represented by these airy, buoyant creatures is that which occupies the mind in its quiet hours, when free from any special excitement; that comes when we are alone and unemployed, or engaged in occupations that require the hands alone, and leave the mind at liberty. Like this family of birds the thoughts are always active. We cannot cease to think even if we would; because we cannot cease to love, for love is life; and the thoughts flow from the affections as streams from a fountain. The life's love, that particular species of good—or, before regeneration, evil—which con-

stitutes us and gives us individuality and identity, is the origin of all thought. When this love or any of its derivative affections is excited, the thoughts are rapid, impetuous, and engrossing; but at other times when it is not aroused by opposition, or the pursuit of any particular gratification, they flow on in a tacit, tranquil manner; not tossing with waves nor rushing like a torrent, but gently rippling like a murmuring rivulet. There appears to be usually, perhaps constantly, a current of involuntary thought—if, indeed, there are not more than one in successive order—flowing beneath that in which the mind consciously and freely engages; and which manifests its existence by occasionally rising above it: as primary rocks 'crop up' through the superincumbent strata. Before regeneration, and during the process by which it is effected, these currents are more or less inharmonious; indeed, they often run counter to each other, and meet in strong opposition. But when the character is fully formed, so that goodness predominates, they flow in one direction—parallel with the stream of providence—and are propelled towards one end—the end to which that is determined. Voluntary thought proceeds from the affections we are conscious of, the secondary ends and aims by which the ruling love seeks its gratification; as a sovereign employs inferior officers to accomplish his purposes. While that which is involuntary may be regarded as an exhibition of the royal sign-manual of the ruling love itself, issued from its seclusion in the inner recesses of the heart; and thus often revealing springs of action that might otherwise remain undiscovered. It is to this distinct order of involuntary thought that the family of birds which has

been indicated appears to correspond ;—the sparrow to its lowest form of activity, and the skylark, possibly, to its highest exercise.

Have we ever watched, in a retired situation, in calm, sunny weather, these sportive inhabitants of the air, of different kinds, flitting from spray to spray, from branch to branch, or—occasionally taking a higher flight—from tree to tree ; chirping, twittering, singing ? How incessant is their activity ! They are never still, and seldom remain long on one level ; reflecting as a mirror the character of our thoughts in times of tranquil satisfaction, when the governing affections are undisturbed. How changeful and discursive these are ! Without fixity or conscious aim they wander from one subject to another, undirected and unrestrained ; yet each is animated by its own life, and gives form to some peculiar affection ; and by noting the quality of the thought we learn to know the nature of the feeling within it. Of these involuntary thoughts the lowest and most worthless are represented by sparrows.

Sparrows, the most abundant of the feathered tribes, and the constant tenants of our streets and roads, fields and gardens, are familiar to us all ; as—in the country—they flit across our path from one hedgerow to another, seek insects in the gardens, or rise in flocks, when disturbed from the corn-fields ; or as—in town—they seek and find subsistence among the refuse of its streets. They are distinguished by a remarkable feature, suggestive of their correspondence—the lowness of their flight. They never soar with the lark, but usually keep near the ground, on which they frequently alight ; and the dweller in cities borrows thence a sooty over-coat that conceals his native

colours. In all these particulars they are striking images of the lowest stratum of involuntary thought, that scarcely rises above the earth, and is busy with its lowest, meanest, and most frivolous concerns. What vain and foolish imaginations flit across the mind, and what mere garbage they can feed upon! How dusky sometimes are the hues in which they present themselves—soiled by the affections that originate and support them! How numerous, also, and intrusive they are, effecting an unwelcome entrance in moments devoted to better things—to serious reflection, to prayer, or the reading of the Holy Word! Wherever the sparrow is seen it is as an attendant on civilised man that it appears, and never as the companion of barbarous tribes. The Esquimaux of the north, the Bushman of the south, has no sparrows to glean the fragments of his unclean repasts. This appears to indicate that the appropriate home and sustenance of the mental sparrow is among the paltry conventionalities of society more or less refined and cultivated. The same low degree of thought with savage tribes is, it may be presumed, occupied with objects coarser and ruder, but more in connection with actual necessities and enjoyments; and has a different symbol in nature.

Sparrows exist in great abundance both within us and without; in our minds and in our streets and fields: but larks are far less plentiful; and they recede from the vicinity of human habitations as the smoke and din of worldly occupations advance: whilst amidst these the former increase and prosper. This clearly points to a different correspondence. Our popular knowledge of the lark includes but few particulars; the most prominent

among them being its lofty flight, and its 'profuse strains of unpremeditated art.'

'Higher still and higher,
From the earth thou springest
Like a cloud of fire;
The deep blue thou wingest,
And singing still dost soar, and soaring ever, singest.'

It is worthy of notice how often the lark has been made the theme of poetic inspiration. Shakspere frequently refers to it; and poets of lesser yet high fame have devoted to it entire poems of great beauty. The author of the lines that have just been quoted asks:

'What objects are the fountains
Of thy happy strain?'

A reply to this inquiry will here be attempted, though one which to his ear would have been inaudible; being founded on higher analogies than those perceptible to the mere poetic instinct.

In this attempt the characteristics of soaring and singing will be the principal guides. No one who has watched a lark on the wing can have failed to observe, not only the height to which it ascends, but, also, the elastic bounds by which the elevation is attained: suggesting the inference that—like the sparrow—it corresponds to unrestrained, unpremeditated thought; for no difficult self-appointed intellectual exercise can be represented by movements exhibiting perfect liberty and entire delight. But its symbolism resembles that of sparrows only in its quality of being involuntary; for unlike them it is conversant not with earth but heaven. The rapture, also, expressed by

its 'rain of melody' affords an important indication. Opinions vary in relation to the nightingale's song, whether it is animated by joy or grief; but that the lark's expresses a thrill of delight is unquestioned. Eminent expositors have been followed in assigning its correspondence to the sparrow;—for determining that of the lark there is no similar authority, no assistance but that supplied by the observation of its peculiar qualities and habits. But, of these its three striking attributes of freedom, ecstasy, and elevation, appear sufficient to lead to the conclusion that it is a symbol of the spontaneous utterances of the renewed affections in states of holy exultation; when, penetrated and permeated by a sense of the infinitude of the divine mercy, the internal and external man unite in a psalm of thanksgiving, for the measure that has been realised of purification from the stains of sin, and release from the bondage of error; and for consequent freedom to love and serve the Lord. The song is a far-away echo of the divine chant: 'Sing, O heavens, and be joyful, O earth; break forth into singing, O mountains, for the Lord has comforted His people, and had mercy upon His afflicted ones.' The lark's song has, likewise, the peculiarity of being audible when the songster has become invisible, having risen higher than the eye can follow it;—so do the affections expand in states of holy fervour, and enjoy perceptions of celestial harmonies, of which the understanding can render no account; that are beyond its power to express or explain. The lark is reported to utter its thrilling strain poised exactly over its nest on the earth among the ears of corn; and it may be observed descending rapidly, first in the circles of a narrow-

ing spiral, and afterwards in a swift perpendicular line, to its mate and brood of young. Poetry on this account celebrates it as a

> 'Type of the wise—who soar but never roam,
> True to the kindred points of heaven and of home.'

And if a liberal significance is allowed to the word *home*, so as to include the whole range of inferior duties, the action is eminently descriptive of the corresponding state. Our human larks emit their songs of rejoicing from 'summits of thought and feeling that are too high to be their abiding home;' and they must of necessity 'return to the plane of common life and common duty, for there must their work be done.' The higher the ascent into the heavens of the mind, the more direct and the lower will be the descent into its earth and outer charities; till they all are penetrated and regulated by the inner and higher life.

The idea sometimes occurs, in view of the bountiful provision that is made for us, of our many blessings,—natural and spiritual, temporal and eternal,—that we ought to be uniformly in a thankful, cheerful, joyful temper; the affections always directed upwards and singing like the lark. But such a disposition of mind as a permanent state is not possible to any one. Alternation of state is the condition of finite existence, and of every degree of it. Even angels have periods of 'sadness;' and how much more liable to similar experience must be the earthly life; in which many trials, internal and external, have to be endured; and states of privation and bereavement, repentance and temptation, to be passed through!

To these we may willingly submit, grateful that such means of restoration are afforded; but we can no more rejoice under their operation than under the surgeon's scalpel. It is true, deep inward peace is often vouchsafed in the darkest hour of outward affliction; which soothes the external into submission and strengthens it for endurance; but, whatever the experience of the internal mind, no song can rise while the external feels—as for the moment it does—that the very life of life has departed. Our pathway lies through dark valleys as well as over sunlit hills; and we travel on by night as well as by day; though with Faith, Hope, and Love, as companions, who sustain both us and each other: but only when the sun has risen and the day begun, when after irradiating the mountain-tops the sunshine descends to gladden the valleys, do the larks also rise and sing. It is the sunshine that inspires the song; and the interior joy it symbolises and expresses is a gift from heaven that cannot be self-induced —that would lose its very essence if it could. Nor is it granted to mere solicitation or importunate prayer; but only as the sequel of full preparation for reception.

Cheerfulness, in the ordinary acceptation of the term, is but another expression for contentment and satisfaction; and therefore seems scarcely compatible with distress of any kind, with either mental or physical pain. As a general rule, all are disposed to cheerfulness when the current of events in which they are interested flows in accordance with their desires. But this agreeable conformity seldom exists with many individuals, and is often interrupted with all. Much of our dissatisfaction in life undoubtedly proceeds from our own undisciplined hearts

and immoderate desires; yet it is often otherwise, and arises from circumstances to which we do not contribute, and that have no claim upon our regard;—things not meant for love, but simply for endurance or, perhaps, compassion; that it would be desirable to alter were it practicable—which it may not be. Now we cannot be pleased with what is displeasing, nor love what we dislike:—Can we then be cheerful under these conditions? A light-hearted frame of mind is so agreeable that all would possess it if they could. No one indeed can regulate his alternations of state nor induce any that are genuine; yet, by governing the external mind it may be disposed for the reception of such as are desired. Efforts in this direction are seldom wholly unsuccessful; and, at the least, serenity may be attained. Much, too, may be gained simply by viewing a position in its just light; without exaggerating causes of disquietude, or depreciating present advantages. When trouble or anxiety oppresses the mind it not unfrequently happens that, if not absolutely the first, yet, certainly, the second waking thought refers to it; and we rise, perhaps, morning after morning with a sense of oppression, or a dreary foreboding of the difficulties of the coming day. But angels—ever near with messages of peace to those who will hearken—bring to remembrance some of those numerous considerations and assurances,—familiar to minds instructed in genuine truth,—of the constant love and supervision of our heavenly Father, who does not willingly afflict His children, nor permit needless pain; and of the use of outward trouble and contrariety. Fortified by these, we school ourselves to acquiesce in the wisdom that withholds a gift, and to enjoy the blessings

that are bestowed. As the day advances the case may look more hopeful; or if it be one to which hope cannot apply, its pressure is less than was expected, or strength is given to bear it. Useful employments occupy the time; agreeable events possibly occur, or enlivening trains of thought are awakened; so that when night arrives we lie down to rest thankful for the blessing of a cheerful day.

The lark's exultant jubilee is in singular contrast with the sparrow's note, which, however, is not less significant. The chirping—so like chattering—of a group of these sprightly, busy, little creatures falls on the ear like the sounds of eager gossipping; with which, indeed, it has some affinity. Sparrows usually, and perhaps necessarily, engross a large share of our familiar conversation, which is mostly on external, trivial affairs; while the larks withdraw for safety and seclusion to their nests; for there are only a few with whom their higher delights can be partaken: a certain internal congeniality being requisite for this, both of character and state. But the affections that animate our social converse are of more importance than its subject-matter; for there may be a soul of goodness in them when the latter is trivial; while, on the other hand, pride and contention may actuate and degrade the discussion of the highest themes. As these insignificant animals have their rightful place and useful function in creation, so have their analogues a place and office in the mind. Every plane of existence has its necessities and duties, and may lawfully claim a share of attention; the lowest as well as the highest, though in due subordination. Without some degree of conformity to the habits of society

—so long as they are harmless—we lose both place and influence, and, consequently, opportunity of usefulness. Multitudes of trifling things make hourly claims upon our notice, our time, and exertions; and the attempt wholly to ignore this low stratum of life, so far from being beneficial, is, in reality, injurious; as nourishing spiritual pride and vanity, which are worse qualities than simple worldliness. Sparrows may be allowed to feed in our gardens, and in seasons of cold and scarcity, we may without rebuke scatter a few crumbs to save them from perishing. Still caution is needful lest they multiply unduly; for although the fact may be difficult to establish in the sphere of nature, yet in the realm of spirit it is certain, that when there is a superabundance of sparrows there is ever a deficiency of larks. They are not, however, to be considered as bearing a bad correspondence, but simply one relating to a low, external range of thought; and their labours in regard to the growing crops lead to the inference that, though they represent thoughts of little worth, such thoughts are not necessarily confined to trifling subjects. The farmer has learned to recognise their value, and to discourage mischievous efforts for their extirpation. They feed, it is true, upon his fields of grain and orchards of ripening fruit; but they also remove insects whose voracity is far greater than their own; and may therefore be considered as receiving what they consume as the reward of their exertions. Growing crops, destined in due time to become food for the body, correspond to the formation and growth within us of states of goodness to sustain the life of the spirit. Noxious insects that infest the green corn and if unchecked would destroy it, represent false sugges-

tions destructive of the incipient good—the offspring of the sensuous mind. Various small birds, and the sparrow among them, search out and remove these insects; and when thus occupied the latter appears to typify—not deep convictions of truth, for these belong to a subsequent state, but—thoughts from the memory, possibly from passages of Scripture there deposited, that meet and repel the influent falsities. This is the work of the spring and early summer: but, as the season advances, autumn approaches and the grain ripens; and then the sparrows themselves feed on the produce they have been instrumental in preserving. Our heavenly Father feeds them with the same food as that which supports the life of man: indicating that when regeneration has so far advanced, a time and state arrives when even the lowest order of external thought is supplied from affections of goodness in accordance with those of the internal mind itself. The internal and the external man are in perfect harmony, and though occupied with different objects on distinct planes, have ends and aims in common. Then the larks carol in the upper skies; and far below, in close proximity to the earth, the sparrows gather their allotted portion of the ripening harvest; while the whole landscape is suffused by the sunshine that animates them both.

THE FALL OF THE LEAF.

The Fall of the Leaf.

'The pale descending year, yet pleasing still,
A gentler mood inspires; for now the leaf
Incessant rustles from the mournful grove;
Oft startling such as, studious, walk below,
And slowly circles through the waving air.
But should a quicker breeze amid the boughs
Sob, o'er the sky the leafy deluge streams.'

THOMSON.

THE natural year and day have each four seasons, or distinct periods, originating in the changing relations of the sun and earth. The sun shines constantly with inalterable splendour in the centre of his dependent system of worlds. All variations, therefore, experienced by the earth are determined by her attitude towards him, in combination with her annual revolution and diurnal rotation. Hence are produced the sweet promise of spring; the bounteous realisation of summer; the accumulated stores, the rest, and the decay of autumn; and the torpidity and cheerlessness of winter. The day has its morning purity and freshness; its mid-day radiance and warmth; its evening tranquillity when the shadows lengthen; and its nightly cold and darkness. So, too, the life of man has its seasons, corresponding to these. First

in order is his spring of infancy, childhood, and youth; when seeds are sown in the mind and germinate—his dawning light, his opening sunshine, and his flowery May. Next come the leafy June and summer of vigorous manhood; and the full operation of the mental and moral chemistry which sublimates crude conceptions into rational principles, disciplines untamed energies to the restraints of orderly activity, and elaborates the fruits, juices, and balsams of a useful life. The autumn of middle life and ripening wisdom succeeds, when the fruits of summer are matured and harvested; and the cycle closes in the night and winter of old age; which is, however, but a prolonged autumn, only a lengthened evening; to be followed by a brighter dawn and a more glorious spring. The good man's life has, in truth, no real night nor winter; and thus regarded, the earthly life corresponds accurately with the alternation and succession of states in heaven, where these dreary seasons are unknown; they being derived from the world which essentially *is* night and winter, and where the sunshine of heaven never penetrates. Strictly, the variations of state in the angelic life are resolvable into two diurnal periods; the morning expressing all that man receives from the Lord, and the evening the same gifts as modified by what belongs to himself;—by the shadows of the proprium which, coming between the heavenly sun and the region of consciousness, induce comparative chilliness and gloom. And thus the 'evening and the morning' constitute each regenerate state and every heavenly day.

The natural seasons have each distinctive phenomena and peculiar charms; and are fraught with lessons of wisdom for the discerning eye. But our attention at

the present time is specially directed to the autumn, and its characteristic feature, the Fall of the Leaf.

The autumnal glory of the woodlands exceeds in richness, though it fails to equal in purity and loveliness, the blossoming of spring; but the colouring is due to the 'effacing fingers' of decay heralding the approach of death. Indeed, decay itself is but a gradual death; each minute element yielding up its life till the vitality of the whole has ceased. The tender hues of the early leafage acquire fulness and depth of green beneath the sunshine of the long summer's day; then a change supervenes, and green gives place to red, yellow, and brown; and, at length, all the graceful drapery drops off, leaving the tree bare,—in appearance, only a woody skeleton. But it falls not till the fruit is ripe; and in the axil of every fallen leaf is a small and tender bud, containing the germ of the verdure, bloom, and fruitage of another year.

Trees correspond to the perception or apprehension of truth by the human mind,—to the manner in which it is seen, understood, and appreciated. There is great diversity in the manner of recognising and receiving truth in different classes of minds, and also in the various faculties and regions of any one mind; and these differences are typified respectively by various kinds of trees. The oak and the cedar may be offered as familiar examples of trees of very dissimilar physiognomy, and of a symbolism equally distinct. The former, 'the gnarled and knotted oak,' represents truth as it is perceived by the lowest intellectual faculty. In this, the scientific region of the mind, which has no apprehension of its interior qualities, truth is seen in a general and therefore obscure manner; only the most

obvious particulars are distinguished, and these are recognised only as facts, and are deposited in the memory as mere knowledge, with little reflection or inference. Truth thus perceived is often accompanied by a hard, contentious self-conceit; by a disposition to over-estimate the acquired possessions, and to boast of 'much goods laid up for many years.' Yet the due acquisition of knowledge is of great importance, for it is the basis on which all higher culture rests; and deficiency in this department of the mind impairs the vigour and activity of those above it. Still, it is only a foundation, and chiefly to be valued on account of the superstructure it supports. How admirably consistent with its correspondence are the form and features of this tree; its attitude of firm endurance, its breadth and strength of limb, the intricacy and contortion of its branches, the compact texture and hardness of the wood! How well it justifies the scriptural comparison, 'strong as the oaks!' How substantial a declaration is it that 'facts are stubborn things!' Contrast with this the majestic stature of the cedar, and its symmetrical form —a 'star-y pointing pyramid.' Observe the level extension of 'its dark green layers of shade,' so suggestive of shelter and protection; and the harmonious effect of its fringed mantle of soft velvet. The perceptions of truth symbolised by it stand a degree of the mind higher than those which have just been glanced at; for it represents the perceptions of the rational faculty, in which knowledge is exalted into intelligence, and facts give place to principles that acknowledge the heaven they aspire to. Of the cedar in Lebanon it is written: 'All the fowls of heaven made their nests in its boughs, under his branches did all the beasts

of the field bring forth their young, and under his shadow dwelt all great nations.' These images express the amplitude of defence and security for all the other powers of the mind, and the opportunity afforded for the acquisition of new states, both voluntary and intellectual, when truth is rationally and intelligently understood.

But, though trees, considered as individuals, and as to the whole of their structure, derive their signification from the properties of the intellect; yet every object in existence, to be anything, must combine in its composition the two universal principles of goodness and truth, or their representatives in the lower planes of being. Thus the woody portions of the tree correspond to the former, and the leaves to the latter; or the stem and its ramifications typify the will and its affections, and the leaves the understanding and its thoughts. Conspicuous in importance, in the organisation of a tree, are its leaves. A large proportion of its nutriment is obtained by their instrumentality, in absorbing gases from the surrounding atmosphere; and the operations that thus support its life and supply some of the elements of growth, at the same time preserve the air in a condition of purity adapted to the respiration of man and the inferior animals. The leafage, likewise, is the great laboratory where, under the action of light and air, crude sap is transformed into the various substances essential to the health of the tree, and the numerous products it supplies for the service of man. And when the fruit is formed and ripened,—the final end of all its activities,—its occupation gone, its gentle ministry no longer required, the leaf drops off.

Accurately and beautifully do these leafy ministrations

represent the functions and offices of truth. For by its activity and agency, the mental and moral atmosphere is kept sufficiently pure to support the life of man; by it the good that ever seeks to descend into the natural mind, and be there realised in useful deeds, is formed into the products of a christian life; and by its operations are built up, day by day, the enduring structure, rooted in the earth of the mind, that can resist the storms of passion and the assaults of temptation. That lofty tree of noble girth and length and breadth of limb consists of minute, microscopic cells, elaborated from the sap and the atmosphere, and deposited one by one by the agency of the leaves,—of those fragile appendages so lightly poised, and so joyous in their labours, that they respond with music and dance to the gentlest airs of heaven! And so by the agency of truth, in corresponding order, the new man is formed within us, not of a few heroic deeds, the offspring of the transient excitement of natural feeling; but of states of goodness which being renewed from moment to moment and consolidated in practice, are added into days, and months, and years. Exquisite lessons of practical wisdom, at once tender and sublime, would the leafy operations yield, could we follow them in their minute details; but the subject proposed for contemplation is not active exertion, but its cessation; not the life, but the fall of the leaf. Botanists are not agreed as to the causes of defoliation; but it is generally attributed to a deposit of earthy matters at the base of the leaf, by which the passage of sap into it is obstructed; when it dies from want of food, and is gently expelled from its resting-place by the nascent vigour of the new bud. Our thoughts, however, are di-

rected, not to natural but to spiritual phenomena—a sublimer physiology.

The falling of the leaves of a tree typifies the fading from the memory of truths that were once in active operation, and cherished objects of delightful contemplation. Leaves, natural and spiritual, fall off from various causes. One of the principal of these is neglect. The gardener and the labourer in the vineyard have to exercise careful supervision in their several departments; to 'dig about the roots,' and supply the necessary elements of growth; for if these be deficient the leaves first droop or wither, and then fall off. So the broad principles of truth which in some special manner have been perceived and accepted, and some of whose thousand particulars are to build up our spiritual life, require similar culture and nutriment. What lies about their bases in the natural mind must be examined, obstructions removed, and needful conditions supplied. Especially must they be duly watered from the perennial fountain of divine truth. For if these duties be omitted, the precepts upon whose vitality and incessant activity all the organic processes and products of the life depend, are overpowered by the strength of selfish and worldly affections, and are gradually, but at length entirely lost sight of. Another cause is strong wind in tempestuous weather which scatters the leaves, and, perhaps, rends the branches, or uproots the tree. There are times when our leafage is green, and recreates by its graceful motion a mind that expatiates in its wealth, picturing to itself states to be realised when faith and charity should unite to fit us for the society of angels. Meanwhile a cloud was rising unobserved, and presently our whole heaven is

obscured;—passion rages, falsities, rendered luminous and dazzling by the glare of hereditary evil, rend the mind and violently agitate the thoughts, like fierce blasts of wind—and the truths that regulated and adorned the life yield to the influx from beneath, and are forcibly torn away and dispersed, leaving only an unsightly wreck. Another fall of the leaf may be glanced at which is final, and followed by no second spring; when the whole tree dies. In the future world, the truths that have not been woven into the texture of the life by love and practice are not merely forgotten, but voluntarily rejected as distasteful and offensive. Evil casts them out as foreign to its essence. The tree is dead, how can the leaves survive?

These, however, are all abnormal states that make no part of an orderly progression, either natural or spiritual. But there is another fall of the leaf that results—not from the frustration of the merciful provisions and purposes of divine love, but from their realisation;—not from defect and incompleteness of state, but from its fulness. Year by year in deciduous trees, and at some regular interval in trees of every description, the leafage falls because its mission is fulfilled, its work accomplished; and is followed by new foliage which succeeds to similar functions. And without this alternate death and life there could be no growth, no increase in the height or bulk of the tree, nor any fresh produce. A similar alternation in cycles of state, corresponding to those of time, makes part of our human experience. The tree parts annually with its drapery of leaves in order that it may grow to the stature and perform the offices of its kind; and in like manner man puts away childish things, and childish apprehen-

sions of things, that he may grow to the stature and fulfil the duties of a man. In early life, and in the formation of the natural mind, many things are learned of little worth in themselves, and only or chiefly valuable as the needful preparation for something better; and when the higher acquisition is made the lower is forgotten. This also is an oft-repeated process, like the recurring fall of the leaf. Even when the judgment is formed and the mind matured many changes of opinion take place; so that few hold in age precisely the same sentiments on any subject as in early manhood. When education has been based on truth, the same general principles may be retained; but how have they budded and blossomed into new particulars!—how has the mind increased in elevation and expansion!—what a sheltering charity has it for the uses and duties of social and civil life! All the successive phases of truth have contributed to form the mind; but as it has advanced beyond them, they have gradually faded from the memory, and only the later developments are retained in activity in the thought.

Analogous to this is the formation of the spiritual man or mind. To love the Lord above all things and the neighbour as himself, is not a gift that springs up spontaneously, but a grace that has to be acquired by the effort and labour of the whole life. The spiritual life is a continual ascent which begins from the very earth: as the tree begins in a small seed sown in the ground. Truths are accumulated in the memory, 'line upon line, precept upon precept,' before their light reveals to the consciousness that there is anything above the level earth to aspire after, or corresponding affections are awakened in

the heart. The first elements received of spiritual good are necessarily low, feeble, and external, and formed by truths of corresponding quality. Some general conformity of the life to the requirements of religion is attained, some of its grosser evils are corrected. But small and weak as the germs of goodness are, they capacitate the mind for a brighter light, a warmer love, and a purer life. And as each individual cell in the substance of a tree becomes in its turn the basis and origin of others, so our truths are multiplied, and the germs of goodness fructify; and thus the new man is gradually formed within us. The student of nature will observe that an individual leaf does not fall as each new grain of wood is added to the tree. Indeed, the labour of a single leaf is inappreciable apart from that of the other leaves. 'Every leaf connects its work with the entire and accumulated work of its predecessor;' and it is by the aggregate work of the whole foliage that the entire structure is formed, as well as the whole of the produce. Each season sees, as the result of this, an increase of height, a new layer of wood, and a larger or smaller fruitage. And it is the completion of these efforts, in the ripening of the fruit, that determines the duration of the leafage. The fall of the leaf, therefore, must find its analogue, not in the mind's daily progress, but in some marked stages of the christian life, when, not the labour of a single day, but a whole year's work has been done. The ripening of the fruit indicates the precise correspondence; for, in similar order, when our states are mature our leaves also fall;—when truths enter the life they fade from the exterior memory. Not that they are obliterated, but quiescent, and only to be recalled by effort.

All states of goodness, or a capacity for its reception and exercise, are formed by the instrumentality of truth. Truth, as light, reveals the nature of both good and evil; and the means of attaining or receiving the former by the ejection of the latter from the heart and life. As law, it directs and enjoins—'This is the way, walk thou in it;' it limits and restrains—'Thus far shalt thou go, and no farther; it prohibits with an authoritative 'Thou shalt not.' As the water of life, it softens the hard earth of the mind, removes its defilements, and refreshes and invigorates the fainting soul. But the truths that capacitate for the reception of heavenly affections are not those by which they come into activity when received. And when the spiritual life is recruited, and the heart softened and purified; when the sin forbidden has become abhorrent, and we walk in the prescribed way, turning neither to the right-hand nor to the left; when our lamps are burning, being supplied with the oil of a pure affection;—then the light discriminates more interior states of good and evil; the law defines the path of life with new precepts and prohibitions; and the healing waters flow on to effect further purification. That is, new truths come into operation for the formation of new states. In other words, when any particular truths that have been kept carefully and constantly before the mind, for its guidance and support in the correction of specific evils, and the formation of good affections and habits, have done their work; that is, when the evils striven against are removed, so as no longer to excite the will; when an affection for the opposite good has been received, and an external life in agreement with it has become habitual;—their office has expired, they are no

longer required in the thought, being inscribed upon the life. By this expression is meant, not merely that they are embodied in the life's actions, but that they have entered the life's love,—have become an indissoluble portion of the man himself,—and thus flow spontaneously into act. They have experienced a resurrection from the dead; have passed from the external to the internal mind, from the exterior to the interior memory, from the spirit's earth to its heaven; while under the divine auspices a new state—the bud in the axil—is in preparation; and their further conscious presence and activity in the thought would be only an obstruction and encumbrance. For the new heavenly affection that is descending into the heart must be protected, nourished, and formed by new truths.

THE LEAFLESS TREE.

The Leafless Tree.

'These naked shoots,
Barren as lances, among which the wind
Makes wintry music, sighing as it goes,
Shall put their graceful foliage on again,
And more aspiring, and with ampler spread,
Shall boast new charms, and more than they have lost.'

COWPER.

THERE are few objects of more perfect beauty and grandeur than a noble tree; especially when, from the presence of the conditions of healthful growth—suitable soil, sufficient moisture, free space, and ample air—it attains its natural height and the due expansion of its branches. How like a monarch does it stand, and what regal dignity is there in the trailing breadth of the lower branches! A different, and perhaps a better simile presents it to the imagination not as a sovereign, but as a people; as a flourishing and orderly community governed by one ruling good purpose; in which every individual is actively engaged in his special occupation, and all are labouring for the advantage of the whole, while each reaps his share of the general prosperity: but in which also may be observed something of the competition, and the struggle for life and pre-eminence, from which even flourishing communities are not exempt. But a leaf-

less tree suggests a total change of imagery and association, and visions of extinct nations float before the mental eye, whose very languages are not merely dead—unspoken —but absolutely unknown. Memory recalls the busy centres of industry and commerce of the ancient world, Tyre or Carthage; where now the enterprising and laborious traveller with difficulty traces a few almost obliterated vestiges of the thriving populations of antiquity: or fancy erects the ruined walls of a Colosseum in the hollow circle of the wasted stem. As leaves correspond to truths, and their uses and functions in the tree to those of truths in the mind, a leafless tree—leafless because lifeless—represents a mind destitute of truths; in which, consequently, there is no intelligence, no progress, no spiritual activity, no fruits of righteousness.

It is not, however, to this state of utter lifelessness that our thoughts are to be now directed; but to the living tree, deprived only for a brief season of its foliage. The fall of the leaf is a circumstance too frequently recurring, and too fully associated with recollections of returning verdure and fertility, usually to be productive of mournful images and reflections. Indeed, like all natural objects, and in all their states, this transitional condition has its peculiar interest and attraction. Some trees, from the delicacy of the smaller branchlets, even in their wintry state preserve contours that are neither hard nor ungraceful. It is then, too, that the true form of the tree is revealed; as that of the body is seen when the drapery is removed; and as that of the spirit is discerned when the truths that are merely adventitious and not assimilated in the life are rejected. This revelation of concealed structure and form, also, affords

the observer additional facilities for recognising the unity of design which constitutes each organ a type of the whole; and, according to which, one pervading law regulates the spread of the tree and of every trembling leaf upon its surface, and defines similar curves and angles in the giant limbs of the former and the delicate veins of the latter. Bare as the tree actually is, dead as it may appear to a careless eye, evidences of vitality are present on its exterior, and life itself is strong at the heart. Life may be indrawn, but is never intermittent. It knows no pause, but flows into its recipients in a continuous stream. And life is love, and love is desire, impulse, and activity; and, on the vegetative plane, it is effort and endeavour to produce a tree capable of perpetuating its kind. Operations transcending the limits of scientific research are even now, in this dreary season, in full activity; as is proved by the enlargement of the buds upon every cessation or diminution of the outward cold, and by their efforts to open as the end of the winter approaches. Patient investigation,—aided by the microscope,—accurate experiment, and cautious induction, have brought to light many minute and wonderful particulars relating to vegetable form, structure, and function. But who shall reveal the interior activities of life as it flows in from the spiritual world? We see the tree in summer draped in beauty; but how it grows, how it puts forth its living garment of leaves, how it buds, blossoms, and bears fruit;—what is the first operation of life and creative power upon matter as they come, as it were into contact in the interiors of nature, what the first impulse of the one, and the first responsive and corresponding act of the other—who shall tell us this? An inquiry, how-

ever, of even greater interest is: What are the practical lessons representatively conveyed by this one object from nature's great picture-book—a leafless tree?

'The regeneration of man is represented in the growth of trees.' We both talk and write largely of regeneration; and so wonderful is the information on the subject contained in the Writings of the New Church, that there is often a danger of forgetting the necessity for its realisation in ourselves, from the interest attending the discussion of the process by which it is effected. Yet what do we know of it? Less than we know of the growth of the tree; for this being wholly within the sphere of nature, the natural faculties are more adequate to its observation and investigation. Or what can we contribute towards it? Precisely what we can contribute towards the existence and growth of the tree. We can sow the seed supplied to us by the divine Husbandman out of His granary; but the seeds themselves are His; man cannot originate a single one, even of the grass of the field which is trodden under our feet. Neither can he make the soil in which it is received; for both soil and seed come from the same divine hand. We can place it where the airs of heaven breathe gently, and the vernal sun shines warmly. We can remove obstructions of many kinds, and water it from the river of life, that thus the conditions may exist in which the life of heaven—the Lord's life—can operate freely: but this is all; for regeneration from the first, and through every intermediate step to the last, is a divine work. Have we ever seriously reflected on what regeneration is? It is no less than the birth and growth within us of a new life, and the removal of the original natural and evil life to make

room for its descent and presence. This change is as actual as that resulting from the death of the material body; but it is effected as gradually as the growth of a tree; so that though the life is changed the identity is preserved.

It is perhaps difficult to obtain definite ideas as to what this change of the life really is. It is a change of the love and all its derivative affections, one by one. When our states are sufficiently matured to sustain a ray of the light which reveals us to ourselves, a discovery is made of some impure affection firmly established in the heart, and embodying itself in corresponding outward habits. It has always been there, but we were ignorant of its existence; or, possibly, so great was the mental darkness, that we called the evil good and valued ourselves upon it. The outward habits may be difficult to amend, but their correction lies within our province and capacity, and we can effect it; but the corrupt affection itself which generates the habits, which makes part of ourselves—of our very life—which enters into our daily occupations, and reveals itself in the involuntary thought,—here we are powerless and can effect nothing. We see it, condemn it, and lament its presence in the will; but there it is still. We can resist the influence of an impure affection, and refuse to act as it would impel us; and this we must do if the work of purification is to be effected at all; but to its ejection from the heart only divine power is adequate, for no man can change his love by any degree of volition or effort; indeed, so far is this marvellous operation beyond the limits of human capacity, that to the merely natural mind it is as incredible as the restoration of life to the dead. Still, in our upward progress we learn to accept the declaration that 'with God all things are possible,'

even the removal of a selfish affection from the heart, and the implantation of a heavenly one in its place; and the tribulation and temptation incident to the change are represented by the tree in its wintry, leafless condition.

In the autumn, when the fruit is ripe and the work of the season completed, the unceasing energy of creative life displays itself in the formation of new buds. They become visible, and increase so long as the temperature is favourable; but between their formation and development lies the period of winter. The tree is assailed by drenching rains, and icy winds from the north; and by deep snows that weigh heavily upon the branches, and in which the buds lie buried. The nights are long and the days are short; there is little light and no warmth; and, as a climax, fierce, biting, dessicating blasts from the east, and, perhaps, prolonged and apparently unseasonable frosts, threaten to blight the prospects of the coming year.

The new bud represents the germ of a new heavenly affection which the Lord has inseminated in the inner man, and which seeks a basis and resting-place in the natural mind, whence it may go forth in healing words and beneficent deeds. But, as yet, it is small and feeble, and shrinks within itself at the first chilling breath of the uncongenial region into which it endeavours to descend; for it finds there no homogeneous affection in which it can dwell, nor any corresponding truths for its protection, and by which it can operate. Yet, weak as it is, and faint its illuminating power, it is strong enough to show us one of our specific evil tendencies, in direct opposition to itself, and to convince us that it is evil, and must be resisted. But the natural affections cling to it. Though satisfied

of its evil nature, and that its indulgence is forbidden, we wish it were otherwise—that it were something that might be cherished and enjoyed—and thus the influent affection is checked and driven back. Not long, however, does it remain dormant; for as the life within the bud renews its exertions, and resumes its efforts to expand and establish itself in the outer world, if only a few gleams of sunshine abate the rigour of the atmosphere; so the divine life that is the inmost soul of every good affection renews its activity whenever, by some merciful permission of Providence, sickness or sorrow, outward suffering or adversity, diminishes the intensity of the worldly and selfish attachments of the external mind. And thus, though often repulsed, yet by persevering endeavour the celestial messenger effects an entrance there, and becomes—not at home—but a freely admitted and an honoured guest. Then, however, the severity of the trial only commences. The evil spirits who dwell in and animate our corrupt affections, resist the efforts to expel them from their 'ancient seats,' and assault the nascent grace, while good angels gather around for its defence. Thus there is severe combat between the opposing principles of good and evil within the battle-field of the human mind, as to which shall become its permanent inmate and possessor; while the struggle is felt within us as that of our own conflicting thoughts and feelings. Within that small chamber the rain, the snow, and the frost, the northern and the eastern blasts, have all to be experienced, though in varying succession and with periods of intermission. Thus the tree is bare and the spirit desolate. The former leafage has fallen and the new does not appear. The truths of a

previous state are indrawn, and those of the inceptive good are not developed; and as at this season, even when no tempest rages, the healthful breezes which may be regarded as airs from heaven are still keen and strong; so such truths as are present to the thoughts are of a severe and prohibitory order. No foliage gently sways moved by soft southern airs; and from the consciousness are absent those general truths, and that pervading sense of divine paternal care, in which, in happier times, the mind could expatiate and the heart expand.

As the tree in its various states represents man's spiritual experience, so is it also his instructor. It cannot lessen the rigour of the frost, nor hasten the arrival of the summer's sunshine; and these seem the indispensable conditions of relief. What, then, is its teaching in this bitter period of adversity? It teaches by example; and the lesson—communicated only to the thoughtful observer—may be comprised in few words. It is, simply, firm endurance, and patient waiting for the spring-time which, though it may be retarded, will surely come at last. The waiting, too, though patient is scarcely passive; for it stands prepared and in readiness to act at the first relaxation of adverse influence, at the first warm breathing of the spring. Imbibing the lesson in a submissive temper, the pupil remembers the unfailing certainty with which vegetable phenomena are repeated through long cycles of time; and how in changeless order the sterility of winter ever precedes the productiveness of spring; and with a sense of comfort, and some perception of their significance, he recalls the sacred words—'As the days of a tree are the days of my people.'

SPRING BUDS AND BLOSSOMS.

Spring Buds and Blossoms.

'There's not a flower of spring,
That dies ere June, but vaunts itself allied
By issue and symbol, by significance
And correspondence, to that spirit-world
Outside the limits of our time and space,
Whereto we are bound.'

MRS. BROWNING.

THE mutual correspondence of the natural and spiritual worlds, and of the objects of the former in the various conditions of their life and growth, with the graces, states, and phenomena of the latter, imparts to visible nature a power of affecting the heart distinct from that derived either from its wonders or its beauty. At all periods of the year this is familiar to the experience of the receptive mind, but is never so obvious as in the season of spring, when the earth is reassuming the verdant drapery that had been laid aside during the winter. Infant vegetation appears to possess a measure of that power of exciting feelings of tenderness and affection which belongs in a higher degree to the young of the animal creation, and pre-eminently to the human infant. An influence is present not easily to be described; and it appears to affect the heart so exclusively, and so little to enter the understanding, that

words are wanting for its outward expression. Is it that the heaven of innocence which lies around the newly-formed human being extends its influence to the young buds also? The heavenly Father's care is present with them—why not that of angels? Or may it be that some vestige still remains of the capacity enjoyed by man in the infancy and innocence of the race, when creation lay before him as an open book, wherein he read lessons, not of natural science, but of spiritual wisdom? Only now this perceptive faculty is indrawn to a region beyond that of conscious thought, and reaches the heart alone, filling it with a certain indefinable tenderness.

How exquisitely lovely is that small, delicate bud! So fragile is it that the pressure of a finger would destroy it; yet within is the capacity of becoming a tree of lofty stature and wide extent; affording food and shelter for man and beast, while the birds of the air build and sing in the branches. How does it emulate and image the noble capabilities of man; reminding us that in each cradled infant is the undeveloped germ of a glorious angel, with all his voluntary and intellectual endowments! The feeble, tender embryo lies nestling in soft, silky down and wrappings of elegant texture; suggesting that something better than selfish and worldly vanity are stirring in the mother's breast, when she delights to enfold her infant in the loom's most delicate web, or the fingers' more costly embroidery. What wealth of associations is present in the mind; and what sweet recollections rise in the memory of the parental love that tended our own infancy, shielded it from harm, and smoothed the path of opening life! And then the thought is elevated to the universal Father, and

to His love imaged and revealed in that of the human parent. We are all His children, and the most mature are still in the infancy of their being—weak and helpless, but safe in the enfoldings of His love. As, too, in the universe at large His care extends to the minutest seedling, so in the little universe of man is He present to nurture and cherish every feeble germ and budding state of goodness.

As was shown in a former paper, the spring buds typify heavenly affections descending from the Lord, through the internal man into the natural mind; there to become active principles, diffusing and perpetuating themselves in pure thoughts, truthful words, and useful deeds. There, however, they meet nothing but hostility; for the natural mind is in alliance with the world of evil and darkness, of which by birth it is an image. All the evils of the heart, stimulated from beneath, rise up in opposition to the heavenly visitants, especially those whose contrariety is the most direct; and thus commences the season of trial and temptation symbolised by the retardation of vegetable life by the violent storms, rigorous cold, and other features of winter. Wonderful operations at this time are performed within the interiors of the mind, but they are far withdrawn from human knowledge and observation. Their results only are revealed to the consciousness, and that vaguely and obscurely, in distressing conflicts of thought and feeling, and a general sense of disquiet and disturbance,—sometimes of utter hopelessness. The new affections produce no happiness, while the former complacent enjoyment in evil is destroyed. We seek rest, but as yet find none. The germs of heaven instead

of amending our state appear to strengthen our evil tendencies; though in the effort to resist them in heart and life, a conviction of sin and a sense of guilt oppress us, which were unfelt when we indulged them unreflectingly. Now, too, they are always present to us with their evil incitements and allurements. But the same depth of evil was there before, and only not felt in similar intensity because its power was undisputed. Resistance has aroused stronger infernal influx that excites it into activity. The sin and the guilt were there, only not recognised as such. The reason is, that 'where good is present evil shows itself.' It is unseen while we are immersed in it, but becomes visible as we rise above it. What is wanting to the buds is chiefly sunshine and fostering warmth; and it is observable that when once the sun's rays acquire strength and persistency they make perceptible and even rapid progress, though wind and storm and snow are still of frequent occurrence.

What, then, is wanting to us that our buds may expand? That which the sun's rays correspond to,—warmth, sunshine in the heart, the reception of the sunshine of heaven, the love of the incipient good. A marvellous work has to be performed within us, to which only the Redeemer's hand is competent;—the work of casting out devils—of ejecting from the heart the evils that reign and tyrannise there. But we are free agents, and the work must have our own consent and co-operation. Our evils cannot be removed till we are willing to part with them. So long as the natural mind clings to them, and contemplates their gratification as something desirable were it not forbidden, they must remain, if not rule, within us. The understand-

ing already sees their true quality, and the heart must learn to feel it;—must learn to loathe them as altogether vile, and to reject them as too hateful in themselves to be indulged, even were they not forbidden. This state of aversion to any evil, however, is only in proportion to the love of the opposite good, for it is ever through the new love that the Lord casts out the old; and when that becomes strong and ardent the trial ends. In the human spirit, as in nature, the prevalence of sunshine terminates the winter. Who has not observed, and not only seen but felt the surpassing beauty of the change—as if some responsive chord were awakened in the recesses of his bosom—when, after a few days of continuous sunshine, the buds open, and by an almost instantaneous effort the trees are clothed with leaves and flowers! A corresponding change takes place in the human spirit, only the 'vesture of decay' that encloses it so dulls its perceptions that little more becomes apparent to it than a general sense of peace and rest, which diffuses itself through the mind and all its faculties.

Let us now examine one of these buds, and endeavour to elicit from it some ideas, however dim and scant, of the unremitting care that guards and cherishes our feeble germs of heavenly affections. The infant tree—the progenitor, perhaps, of a whole grove of trees—lies like a sleeping infant tenderly cushioned on a soft downy pillow. The rudiment of a whole branch is there, with its branchlets, leaves, and flowers. In its very centre is the fragile germ, hereafter to be developed into bright blossoms. Fine wool covers it and wraps it over and over; the leaves are disposed around; and, lastly, it is carefully

enveloped in beautifully-imbricated and delicately-tinted scales. The latter, aided by an odorous resin that prevents rain or melting snow from penetrating, protect it from cold and the other injuries it may be exposed to from the outer world. Science assures us that all the organs of a plant are but modified leaves; and in this light, therefore, these scales must be regarded. Still they differ greatly from the perfect leaf in many respects. The mode of venation is wholly different; and one feature of it, the absence of woody fibre connecting it with the woody system of the tree, suggests that they exist only for brief temporary purposes, and are soon to be dismissed. Such, indeed, is the fact. They unclose as the bud enlarges; and when it opens they wither and fall off. Though not true leaves, they yet appear to fulfil the functions of leaves in ministering to the life of the bud; but their principal office is defence. As modified leaves they correspond to some form of truth; probably to crude conceptions, vague and initiatory, but still in harmony with the affection of goodness within,—itself only a rudiment. They may represent the defective appearances of truth which the immature affection first evolves, and by which it reveals itself to the understanding; soon to be relinquished as inefficient, as that advances and expands. In a certain sense, the new life within us is ever in the bud—ever opening and rising towards an unattained maturity;—is ever rejecting inadequate appearances of truth, and investing itself with others less imperfect. The time will come when the sweet wisdom hidden in the bud will be read by those to whom it is adapted; but very little of it can now be seen. States and operations beyond the present reach of human thought·

are there representatively depicted; but were they written in words our perceptions are probably too obtuse to comprehend them. Let us be grateful for the light we enjoy; when we can use more it will be granted to us.

Botanical research has established that the bud is connected with the whole of the tree; with the central pith, the cellular tissue, the woody fibre, and the bark. In the human mind, in like manner, every new state is built on all that have preceded it; and would be different had they been different, would be better had they been better,—had the life been purer, repentance deeper, obedience more entire. But no sun can give efficacy to germs blighted in the bud, nor ripen fruits that were never formed. As we have sown, so of necessity must we reap. The past is irrevocable; let us leave it and the thought of it, learning humility from failure; but retaining an all-pervading care not to repeat former errors, not suffer more unfruitful seasons to dwarf and deform our spiritual life.

Attention has been directed to the circumstance that the rudiment of the blossom lies in the centre of the bud; as a consequence, the leaves which are exterior to it appear before the flower can unfold. The leaves that precede the bloom are small, and sparsely distributed; and though there is great variety in this respect with different kinds of trees, usually the foliage does not attain its full luxuriance till the fruit is set and the flower fades. So, in the order of regeneration, truth is the first acquisition of the conscious mind; but were there no affection for goodness within truth would never be acquired. It is indrawn and secure; and not till these earliest truths have prepared for its descent can it become manifest. But when the affec-

tion itself begins to awake, and cold, self-compelled obedience yields to voluntary activity; then the understanding is enriched, truths are multiplied, the mind rejoices in increasing intelligence, and the functions of spiritual life are in full operation.

The blossoming of the tree represents the aspiration of the regenerating mind towards the union within it of goodness and truth, will and understanding, charity and faith; attended by earnest effort for its realisation, and rejoicing anticipation of its accomplishment. Who has not experienced the misery of a divided mind,—of contention and combat between the two essential elements of humanity which were created for perfect harmony and indissoluble union! The Psalmist exclaims—'Behold, how good and pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!' The 'brethren' here referred to are the will and the understanding; and they 'dwell in unity' when the will loves the truths accepted by the understanding, and the understanding thinks in agreement with the affections of the will. But how often does the will oppose the clear rational convictions of the understanding, and long resist its dictates, even when it may not finally refuse compliance with them! Truth points upward to heaven while the will clings tenaciously to earth, and thus the mind is rent asunder; and even when, the opposition being less direct, inclination does not refuse to follow any clearly defined path of duty,—when, if truth be not loved, it is at least accepted as a guide, painful states of unrest and disturbance are of frequent occurrence. There is a consciousness of deficient harmony between principle and practice. The memory may be replenished with truths, but few of them are assimilated in

the life. There is much light with little warmth; and truth is felt to be a stern reprover rather than a faithful friend.

No one is able to form a judgment respecting the interior states of others; neither ought he to desire or attempt it. Yet, without the desire or attempt, there are certain conclusions which so force themselves on the mind as necessarily to gain admittance; and among them is this: that few, if any, pass through the stages of their heavenly training with only the hindrances, trials, and temptations arising from hereditary evil tendencies, and without adding to them others originating in those tendencies made actual. Hence are occasioned feelings of compunction for various shortcomings; and the admonitions of conscience remind us how much failure might have been avoided, how much more good attained or effected. Apart, however, from these considerations of opportunity neglected, or actual guilt incurred, states of contrition do of necessity precede the union of the two heavenly principles of goodness and truth within the mind, and are experienced in a greater or less degree by all in whom it is accomplished. For it is a unity distasteful to the external man, whose natural desires are for the opposite unity of evil and falsity: and were the discordant action of the separated principles not felt their union would never be desired. It is, indeed, the aspiration after union that renders its absence both painful and apparent. Desire and aspiration produce effort, and effort achieves success. Thus a change of state is gradually effected; and the desire, the effort, and the glad expectancy are symbolised by the tree adorned — as for bridal festivities—in its beautiful vesture of flowers. And

then to sanguine expectation it appears as if all trial and difficulty were over; as if faith would be ever clear and love always ardent; so that henceforth nothing should disturb the spirit's peace, nor impede its upward progress. But, as yet, the spring days are often inclement, and the sun is far from the solstice;—the blossoms, too, must all wither and perish before the inmost end for which the tree exists—the production of fruit—can be attained; and corresponding states of still more interior trial and sorrow must intervene before our blossoming affections can be developed, and the fruits of goodness matured.

SUMMER FRUIT.

Summer Fruit.

'In livid ripeness melts the grape;
. . . finish'd by invigorating suns,
Through the green shade the golden orange glows:
Spontaneous here the turgid melon yields
A generous pulp: the cocoa swells on high
With milky riches.'

ARMSTRONG.

THE blossoming of a tree before the production of fruit corresponds to the period of human life 'when the conjugal principle enters the mind and gladdens it, thus when truth is conjoining to good; and in the Word it is compared to the voice and joy of the bride and bridegroom.' To the individual mind in which the two heavenly principles aspire after union and are preparing to commence a united life, it appears as if henceforth the path of holiness would be always smooth and delightful, and of preference be selected; spiritual trial and sorrow seem ended, and regeneration actually accomplished. So, too, do the 'bride and bridegroom' feel their felicity complete, and deem that—come what may—nothing can disturb the sweetness of their union or its resulting peace. Poetry and fiction accept this fallacy in all its intensity; and exhaust imagery and invention in painting the trials and miseries of the separate principles and the delight of

their union, as embodied in their true representatives man and woman,—the hero and heroine of the tale,—and then take leave of them, as if the interest and troubles of life terminated on the marriage day. Yet, the bridal is not the completion, but only the commencement of the union ; and the trials that may follow are deeper than any that can precede it. 'Between the joyful reception and the happy union of goodness and truth there is an intervening state of trial and sorrow,' different from that of earlier experience, and affecting more interior principles. In previous trials the pain was that of parting from cherished, but unholy, desires and delights ; in the present it arises from the dread of not realising in ourselves, and making fully our own, affections of goodness which we have learned to prize as life itself. But little can be said on subjects of a nature so interior : they are too far removed from observation for the actual knowledge of the conscious mind, and too sacred for its inquisitive speculations. This, however, is certain, that the severity of any trial is determined by the strength of the affection assaulted,—by the ardour of our love for the object endangered. Spiritual temptations assail spiritual loves ; and not till these have gained adequate strength are they required to put it forth in resistance. Thus no trials are experienced by him who is unable to sustain them with advantage. The troubles of early, separate life are usually more loud than deep, because external ; those of a later, wedded period are deep and silent, felt but not proclaimed, because internal, and belonging to a region which permits no stranger to intermeddle with its joy or sorrow.

A bitter discovery awaits the youthful pair who enter the marriage covenant of free choice, and from motives of

mutual affection; a discovery to be made individually in each and mutually in each other, of the want of purity in the affection that unites them. Not that the affection is not real, but that it is not genuine; not that it is subordinate to lower affections, but that they exist side by side with it, and contaminate it. These inferior affections dwell of necessity in the youthful mind, and are only, at a distant day, to be removed by regeneration; of such necessity, indeed, that the sensual and worldly mind refuses to believe the union ever originates in any other. And the various processes by which two human beings of different sexes are interiorly united so as to become 'one angel,' are precisely analogous to those by which the unity of the two different principles is accomplished in the individual mind. This similarity is one instance of the wonderful correspondence between the various orders and degrees of spiritual life with each other, and with their representatives in the various orders and degrees of natural life; according to which the lesser ever reflects the greater, and each particular state follows the order of the general one in which it is included. Thus, while all separate states and existences are discriminated by indefinite and inconceivable variety, this pervading principle binds them together in the closest unity with each other, and with Him in whom unity originates.

On a former occasion, we endeavoured to elicit the significance of the fall of the leaf; an analogous occurrence—the fading of the flower—has now to be noticed. The most obvious and beautiful portions of what is popularly called a flower are the petals. They may be considered as leaves of a higher order, finer in texture, richer and more

varied in colour, and often yielding delicious odours. Their functions, also, are higher and more special. The leaves work for the whole of the tree; no part of it is independent of them, or could exist if they were absent. Thus a leafless tree is a barren tree in every particular, being without progress or produce of any kind. The leaves are as the large industrial substratum of society, whose activity and skill are exhibited in every object that ministers to our hourly necessities and bodily comforts; and which is the medium through which divine Providence supplies most of our animal wants, and many of our mental requirements also. The labour of the petals is more limited, like that of high functionaries in the state. They elaborate saccharine matters and fine juices not derivable from the leaves, and having special relation to the fruit. These particulars, all indicative of a higher correspondence than that of leaves, suggest them as types of truths of a more interior order; and the fading of the flower, and the comparative unsightliness that intervenes between the beauty of the fully-developed bloom and that of the ripened or ripening fruit, represent the trials, already glanced at, that occur between the commencement and the completion of the union, and to which many a human heart and home bear witness.

Fruit when first formed is green like leaves, and differs from them as little in composition as in colour. As leaves represent truths, how strikingly does this natural fact reveal the quality of early states of goodness, or, more accurately, of goodness in an early, incipient state, as being essentially not goodness but only truth! In the regenerative process truth is the first acquisition, and its attainment the first effort of the conscious mind; the second effort is by labour

and self-compulsion to obey it. But so long as the practice of christian virtues and the cultivation of christian tempers are self-compelled, so long, and in proportion to the degree of compulsion so far, is the state one of truth rather than of goodness ; for we are not then living out the love of the heart, but doing truth from the understanding. It may be noted also as meriting reflection, that however perfect the outward obedience, while its origin is not love in us it fails to gain love from others ; for only love can win love. High principle and stern, self-denying virtues receive a due meed of admiration, but their possessors are not, as such, admitted into the affections ; we are content to contemplate them and their deeds afar off, without desiring them as household friends and companions. This state of truth is at once unloved and unlovely. It is, likewise, felt to be so by him who is in it ; and is on that and other accounts one of great bitterness. But it must be passed through as an inevitable step in an ascending progress ; for he who would reach the mountain-top must, with more or less rapidity, pass through the intervening space. Thus fruit which at first is insipid—indicating the small amount of either good or truth that is genuine in the corresponding stage of spiritual life, which is devoid of the true flavour of either —becomes acid and unpleasing to the taste before it can ripen and acquire sweetness; and both these states must be experienced and endured before the sweetness of heavenly life can be developed. It has been said, and with partial truth—'If we would be good we must do good;' yet it is a deeper truth that if we would do good we must be good. The divine law must be practised in the outward life before it can be written on the heart, and as a means that it may

be there written; but only when the writing is there—legible and deep—can the performance be called good. What we are, such will our actions be. 'The heart is the treasury whence issue the good or evil that the lips utter or the hands perform; and as our words and works are effects from the good or evil affections of the will, and of the true or false thoughts of the understanding, so do they contain them. Our words and works are reproductive of the good or evil that produces them; they, like fruit, have the seed within themselves that produces trees of the same quality as that by which they were produced. The tree which exists from a seed, exists again in the seed that it produces. In the small seed treasured up in the heart of the fruit, the whole tree is comprehended; its whole history is written; its whole experience is expressed. So in our words and works our whole being is embodied.'* And only in proportion as all self-reference is banished—as we are emptied of self—do our works become good, because in that degree are they done from Him who *is* good.

To work out his own salvation, so to co-operate with the divine operations as that his regeneration may be effected, is the special work which is given every one of us to do; and nothing better than this—no higher use to others—can we accomplish; for only thus, and in the ratio of our purification, do we become channels through whom heavenly influences can operate upon the hearts of others. To be such a channel is man's highest function. Not, indeed, to be a passive medium, like a conduit which may receive either wine or water and transmit it unaltered;

* *Vide* Bruce's *Commentary on the Gospel according to St. Matthew.*

but a distinctively human channel that receives and appropriates, and then modifies and transmits the gift as its own, though with acknowledgment of the Fountain whence the stream descends. Our uses through eternity depend on this; for the degree of our own purification determines the degree and the measure of our beneficent action on the internal mind of others. Thus the angels of the interior heavens have incalculably greater power for good than those of the exterior, and the angels of the inmost heaven—the heaven of love—greater than all. A curious distinction is observable in relation to this subject. In both the present and future world the higher uses are performed by the men of love; but for what may be more particularly regarded as this world's work—action on the external mind of others—different qualifications seem necessary; and observation tends to establish that this is emphatically the portion of the men of truth. The former class may pour oil on the imperfect machinery of the social fabric, and so prevent needless attrition; but social improvements, resistance to oppression, reform of abuses, and conflict with evil of every kind are allotted to the latter. Love being non-combative, this is unavoidable. Yet, when the actual labourer—with garments rent and stained—pauses for needful repose; and—heated, dusty, bruised, and scarred—sees him who never fights with unruffled visage and unsoiled robes walking on soft turf in sheltered paths, a disposition to murmur sometimes rises in his heart, that on him 'the burden and heat of the day' should fall. Be patient, Friend. Thou canst not do his work; be satisfied to do thine own, and thankful that some use to which thou art competent is appointed thee. The

time may come, will come if thou art faithful and persevering, when thou too shalt walk in white and sit down at the marriage-feast.

Vegetable chemistry hesitates in its reply, when interrogated as to the manner in which the sour and distasteful fruit becomes sweet and delicious. But this at least is certain, that the change is effected by the same divine power that operates analogous and equally inscrutable changes in the human mind and heart. As the summer advances the days lengthen; and when the sun reaches the solstice there is scarcely any real night; long periods of uninterrupted sunshine are of frequent occurrence; and the result is an all-expanding warmth of temperature. The fruit gradually enlarges, softens, and matures; becomes filled with rich saccharine juices, and reflects on the rind the sun's golden hue. In like manner does the Sun of heaven ripen human hearts when they turn towards it day by day, and open more and more for the reception of its beams. Persevering obedience induces a second nature on the external, and the Lord implants within a new will in harmony with His own. Mr. Bruce, in his *Commentary* already quoted, observes, 'Christians often lament their want of love to God. If they have not much love, they need have no lack of obedience. No one can force himself to love, but every one can compel himself to obey. And he who begins with honest, though it be but cold, obedience, will, by a conscientious discharge of duty, gradually come to have and to feel that love the absence of which he laments. Although love cannot be willed into existence, it can be wrought into existence. If we give God obedience, He will give us love.' In the state represented by the ripened fruit, this love has been given

and received. The life is no longer one of constrained submission to an outward law, but of spontaneous conformity to pure inward impulses. The character and temper are softened, broader and deeper sympathies are awakened. The grace and rounded beauty of the fruit find their counterpart in the daily life and conversation, as also does its rich, warm colouring. The sweetness of love is in the heart, and diffuses itself around like an odour. Natural sweet tempers seated in the external mind have been, not inappropriately, called the 'gems of social life;' yet, so far from being incompatible with selfishness and impurity, they are often in close alliance with those qualities, and are sometimes so overpowered by them as to be wholly extinguished, and replaced by petulance and unkindness. But the sweetness of the second nature is part, not of the natural, but of the spiritual inheritance; and while its developments are in the external life, its origin is in the interior affections. Hence it is not fitful but permanent; and happy indeed is the social or domestic circle which its influence pervades and surrounds, making it a very haven of peace.

Reference has already been made to the circumstance that fruit contains within it the means of perpetuating and multiplying the description of tree that produced it indefinitely, through generations in long series and succession; and that, also, without the slightest variation. So, too, the individual tree produces year after year precisely similar fruit. It may vary in quality, but never in species. When once a healthy tree has reached such maturity as to bear good fruit it has reached a climax, and can make no further advance. Thus, in strictness, each year's growth represents

the whole of regeneration rather than any particular stage of it: only as the greater and the less, the general and the particular, follow one law, it is also capable of a more limited application to particular states of the great process. The natural and material sphere being the ultimate plane of existence, it is necessarily incapable of descent; and, being matter and not spirit, of ascent also. It can but repeat the same phenomena, and thus, as a circle, return into itself. Not so with man. No circle bounds his life, nor any part of his experience. The year's annual fruition, it is true, represents both the general and the particular stages of an orderly heavenward progress, and each terminates in one which is similar to that in which it began,—analogous, but never the same. The completion carries a new beginning within it, but on a higher plane—the beginning not only of a new, but of a better state. Every state of goodness realised in the heart not only evolves new truths by which to produce itself outwardly in act, but is as ground in which new truths leading to further states of goodness may be sown. Common experience in the mind's outer courts bears testimony to this; for who ever corrected one bad habit or temper without, from the amended condition, discovering others that had previously existed unsuspected within him? And the discovery is made by truths not previously self-applied, and therefore new to him, however old they may be to others. Not the circle, but the spiral, represents human progress; and as each completed whorl stands above the one previously formed, so may man ever aspire and advance towards an increasing though unattainable perfection.

With the ripening and garnering of the fruit a wondrous

cycle of operations closes; but closes to be as often renewed throughout the earthly and the heavenly life; but with this marked difference, that in heaven the state which intervenes between the full fruition of one season and the budding of the next is not one of trial and temptation; for there the tree is never wholly bare nor the spirit desolate; but only of comparative 'sadness.' Ever, through eternity, the divine Sower goes forth to sow; and 'when the time of the fruit is come,' the plants of His planting yield their increase, some thirty, some sixty, and some a hundred-fold, according to their respective degrees of spiritual life; and then the leaves fall. For the law of human perfectibility is invariable which requires that something of self shall be relinquished, before new states of goodness from the Lord can be developed.

ROOTS.

Roots.

'A tree's mere firewood, unless humanised;
Which well the Greeks knew. . . . .
. . . . For us, we are called to mark
A still more intimate humanity
In this inferior nature.'

MRS. BROWNING.

MAN stands alone at the head of creation as the direct and immediate image of his Maker; while all inferior beings aspire towards the divine likeness as it exists in him. According to their order and degree, they all have reference to him; some corresponding to specific human qualities, faculties, or functions; some to distinct stages of regeneration; while others—such, for instance, as trees—have a wider range of significance, and comprehend the whole phenomena of his existence.

A tree as an entire structure, including all its parts, represents man; and embraces in its symbolism the whole of his being—the natural and the spiritual parts, the earthly and the heavenly. All that rises above the surface of the ground appears to image something belonging to that portion of him which is intended to ascend above the material plane of existence, and still to live when the lower life ceases; not being, however, necessarily heavenly

as to all its particulars, but capable of becoming so. Distinguished from this as much in outward condition as in significance, all that is underground—the root—represents the sensual and earthly mind which adheres to the body and perishes with it; the natural memory being all that is retained after death, and that in a dormant state.

To raise a tree a small seed, sometimes extremely minute, is placed a few inches within the earth, and, provided there is due adaptation of soil and situation, a twofold action commences. The forces of nature, in particular warmth and moisture, act upon it from without, and simultaneously life from the spiritual world acts from within. These distinct but corresponding powers produce a twofold operation in the seed; it strikes a root downward in the earth, and sends a stem upward towards heaven. It is presumable that this double action proceeds as long as the tree lives; it is certain that it continues so long as it increases in height and lateral extent. Thus a definite relation is preserved between its dimensions above the surface of the ground and those beneath it; and it is by this means that a sufficient basis is acquired for the vast structure it may ultimately become — for the tall majestic stem and the wide-spreading branches. It is also by the clasping action of the rootlets, and the wide, firm grasp they obtain of the earth, that a form so particularly exposed to the force of the winds is enabled to resist their power, and even to gain strength from the conflict. As just remarked, the stem—the tree as distinguished from its root—rises perpetually towards heaven into air, light, and sunshine; the root, after a short downward growth, spreads in darkness further and further in

a horizontal direction, weaving its fibrils, as the smaller rootlets are called, more and more closely with the earth, and in contact with its dead, unclean materials. The tree, rising and expanding both grandly and gracefully, annually clothes itself in a leafy garment of green, variegated for a brief season by resplendent blossoms, succeeded by richly-tinted fruit. The foliage affords food and shelter to large colonies of insects of bright and delicate wing; and birds of sweet song or gorgeous plumage nestle in the branches; while the fruit yields sustenance both to man and the lower creation. The root, which shuns the great source of colour—light—borrows its dusky and unlovely hues from the decayed substances that compose the vegetable mould in which its fibrils lie buried. It bears neither leaf, bud, nor blossom. Indeed, to be destitute of leaves with a bud in the axil, is the great negative characteristic of a root as distinguished from the stem. It puts forth no symmetrical branches, but divides and subdivides into rootlets and fibrils, according to circumstances, without perceptible order or arrangement; while within and around their intricate contortions unsightly worms and crawling insects live and multiply.

As these particulars rise in idea distinctly before us, and we contrast the attributes of the spiritual with those of the natural mind—the tree with its root—a sensation of surprise is experienced that so many of us elect to live as roots in the dust of the earth; stretching the fibres of our being ever further into its festering elements, and clinging to them with an ever-tightening grasp; living in the mere sensuous nature, and drawing all our nourishment from its delights; when we might as noble trees rise into the

actual heaven, inhale its fragrant airs, appropriate its sunshine and its dew, and assimilate them to our own substance.

That the correspondence of a root is such as is here ascribed to it becomes evident when its two great functions are considered; which are, first, as a foundation, to support the whole superstructure of the tree; and secondly, as one of its means of nutrition, to draw aliment from the earth. A root, it will be observed, is of no value in itself, but derives its worth from the circumstance that it is a foundation on which a structure nobler than itself is to be erected; and the relation subsisting between root and tree images that of the natural to the spiritual mind. That, also, has no inherent worth and dignity, or only a degree of it which is possessed in common with the beasts of the field. It is by virtue of the living human soul that dwells within it—the immortal spirit—and through it, that man receives the various gifts that distinguish him from them. Without it he would not even have the power to stand erect and scan the heavens with an upward glance; but would cling, as they do, to the earth from which they are taken and to which they return.

But while the position and function of the root indicate the subordination and subserviency of the mental region it typifies to the superior one to which it ministers, they reveal also its importance; and the dependence of the higher on the lower for its formation and conservation. The whole spiritual world rests on the material universe, as the tree on its root; that an angelic heaven may exist man is created; and similar is the connection of the lesser heaven and earth

of the internal and external mind. And to qualify the latter for the office of enabling the living spirit to communicate with dead matter, it is formed first of spiritual, next of natural, and lastly of material substances. The universe of spirit and matter and individual man are amenable to the same laws. In the formation of that universe which includes both worlds, the divine efflux proceeded outward, and still outward, till it rested in the creation of inert substances; and in this ultimate degree creation becomes fixed and permanent. Human activities, in their humbler sphere, follow the course of the divine; and only become fixed and permanent by contact with matter also. What is the value of the thought and affection that fail to descend into speech and action, and thus into the material organs of the body itself—into the eye, the lips, the hands, the feet? They flow off like vapours; and are mere 'volatile existences in the mind, which do really take wing and fly away, unless they are fixed firm in uses.' But what is brought into its lowest and ultimate form remains, and contributes its part in making us what we actually are. Outward words and deeds are the very roots of our being, by which we gradually establish a firm and ever widening basis of good or of evil; which begins with the dawn of existence, and continues extending to its close. The first minute germinating leaf ascending heavenward corresponds to the dawn of conscious will and thought; and the earliest delicate radicle to the first voluntary act. As the root supports the tree, enables it to maintain its erect attitude, and resist antagonistic forces; so do actions that become habitual give stability, consistency, and permanency to the character. Our habits are our principles,

either of goodness and truth or of evil and falsity, brought into their lowest manifestation; and, like the fibrils of a root, are interwoven with the very ground of the mind—nay more, with the actual substances of the body itself. What is it that gives expression to the countenance, but moral qualities habitually indulged till they mould the corporeal frame into a corresponding form? 'The mind is the great sculptor, and, line by line, traces its own habitual moods and states of affection upon the body and moulds it into its likeness.' Passing over the glaring instances in which intemperance and profligacy affix an indelible stamp upon the brow; how obviously do pride, vanity, irritability, obstinacy, and other qualities reveal their existence, in lines that all can read though none can explain? Or, borrowing illustrations of a more pleasing character, how frequently are faces possessing few of the elements of physical beauty, rendered attractive by what the poet calls 'sweet records' impressed by the exercise of tender or benevolent dispositions? Sweet records are they that become 'promises as sweet;' for good affections, so cultivated as to set their seal on the material flesh and blood, are seldom liable to be eradicated by opposite influences.

The difficulty of correcting evil tendencies derived from the hereditary nature and confirmed by actual practice, and which have thus become habitual, is well known to all who have seriously undertaken the task, and only to them. Even the preliminary acknowledgment that the feeling, or temper and habit, are evil and must be amended, is seldom of easy attainment; because the natural will refuses admittance to the light that would reveal its real quality. But—the truth fully recognised—conviction well wrought into the mind

brings with it an increasing aversion to the evil itself. Its quality is felt as well as seen; and in unhesitating confidence, and what has been happily described as 'the magnanimity of thought,'—of thought that, when the evil itself is quiescent, prescribes a law for the future,—we resolve that our life and character shall no longer be disfigured by anything so mean, or selfish, or degrading. We fortify the resolution by just considerations, and determine to be watchful. The evil, however, besets us in an unguarded moment of fancied security, or assails us in some new and unexpected form, and before—according to appearance—there is time to collect weapons of spiritual defence, we are overcome by the enemy; and the accustomed deeds are done, or words spoken, that inflict a wound upon the conscience, add a new fibril to the evil root, and interweave it further in the mental earth. Thus we 'resolve and re-resolve;' and many failures, dissipating self-confidence, usually precede success, even when it is at last achieved. Years are lost in sinning and repenting, and then sinning again; and life itself perhaps draws to a close before its lesson—how to live wisely—is practically learnt.

We not unfrequently seek to palliate an offence committed under sudden impulse or provocation, by the plea that had there been time for reflection we should not have been guilty of it. This is undoubtedly true when the desire for amendment is sincere; for deliberate indulgence of an evil involves the intention to retain it. Still, lapses into evils condemned by the conscience prove by how firm a grasp they hold possession of the will: and the habit of excusing them, either to ourselves or others, is inconsistent with any interior desire for their removal. The bare fact

of extenuating a fault proves that we do not wholly hate and detest it. We indeed acknowledge the evil it springs from as an enemy, yet not so entirely an enemy but that we may occasionally shake hands with it, place ourselves on its side, and defend it as a friend. Could we so far silence the proprium as neither in word nor thought to justify our failings, but at once to condemn them as inexcusable, the actual rejection of evil would be easier, and sooner effected. For, admitting the excuses offered to be what the world calls valid:—what is their intrinsic value? They may acquit us in the eyes of others, but can have no good effect on ourselves. No opinion can alter the fact that we have done the supposed misdeed in opposition to conviction and resolve; that we have allowed an opportunity of loosening the hold of an infirmity to pass unused; nay, further, have suffered it to root itself more firmly. Will any honest mind then pretend that such excuses are not injurious—blinding to the eyes and confusing to the judgment? Are we vindictive, envious, or arrogant; or, borrowing examples from lesser and more superficial defects, fretful, petulant, or vain? Many other evils we have, but being unconscious of them we cannot strive against them. These, however, we are acquainted with; we have seen them in ourselves, and know they are active within us. The question for us then is this: Do we so love these evils as to be willing to retain them for ever? to have our characters formed from them through eternity? and, as association in the future life is regulated by similarity of affection, to have similar characters for constant companions and friends? If not thus willing, dismissing all attempts at extenuation, we must resist them earnestly and perseveringly till success rewards the effort.

'Cease to do evil'—shun the particular evil that is detected—is a very simple precept; yet its observance opens the door to all heavenly influences; and, in particular, to the grace of humility. The effort to obey, and the inevitable struggle that ensues, reveal us to ourselves as nothing else can do. Only by these can be learnt the strength and extent of inherent evil inclinations. How mortifying is the inability at once to reject some disposition we are ashamed of and unwilling to acknowledge—that oft-repeated effort should be required to accomplish it! Pride adheres to difficult external acts, and only the graduated christian can perform them simply and without elation. Hence, in all ages, when religion decays, men have endeavoured to substitute outward observances — penance, sacrifice, ascetic severity—for the renunciation of evil from the heart. We can reflect with complacency on the voluntary endurance of external suffering, or the surrender of external advantage; but to struggle long with a disposition to self-conceit, sensual indulgence, or other corruptions;—what room for pride is there here? On the contrary, we can but humble ourselves in the dust of self-abasement; and as we are thus emptied of ourselves, heaven can enter in and fill us with its purity and goodness.

Our failures have a twofold origin; an internal one, and an external. Evils are not in us as part of our being; they flow into us from the infernal world; but they flow into an organism adapted to their reception. Every evil disposition renders us liable to the attacks of spirits characterised by similar evil who find a basis for their operations in our corrupt tendencies, and solicit us to indulge them. By yielding to their urgency and allowing these tendencies to

become actual, an alliance is formed with the enemy; and, to a certain extent, we become one with the evil power that assails us. Every repetition of a disorderly indulgence confirms this amity, and enlarges the circle of our infernal associates. Each assault is therefore more potent than the last; while the impure inclination is stronger in ourselves, and the power of resistance in the same degree impaired. In addition to this, the exteriors of the natural mind and, it may be presumed, the interiors of the bodily organs also, have become adapted to the influx and, as it were, stand waiting for its reception, and prepared to respond. The state may be compared to an arrangement of tubes for the conveyance of a fluid, which requires only that it should be 'turned on,' and the contemplated effect immediately follows. Hence the instant defeat; for the evil influence finds an organism ready to react in its favour, and a channel for its translation into actual words and deeds; while the purpose of resistance has scarcely obtained—so to speak—a footing on the threshold of the conscious mind; all whose activities are disposed in a contrary direction, and have to be constrained to acquiescence. Nor can the disorderly action of the external be repressed, and the affection that originates it removed from the heart, but in proportion as the new heavenly affection which is to supersede it effects, under divine auspices, not a figurative but an actual inversion of state. The organic forms of the external mind must receive a new direction, that they may act in unity with the new influent life as they formerly did with the old; that when the provocation, allurement, or suggestion that once excited them to action recurs, finding them disposed in a contrary order, it may pass by leaving us unharmed, as

though it had not been. Nor is this all. As we cease to do evil we learn to do well: and a time at length arrives when the grace directly opposite to the evil that has been subdued flows spontaneously into action, having become part of the life and character. It brings with it, likewise, a proportionate measure of the happiness inseparable from goodness of any kind or degree; though, the spiritual senses being dulled and blunted by the dense worldly sphere in which we live, this may only become apparent to our perceptions in a vague feeling of increased tranquillity.

A circumstance already adverted to has here to be noticed. The tree continues rising till maturity is attained; but the root, as we have seen, after the first limited descent is completed, however long may be the period of growth, only increases laterally. There is a similar relation between the spiritual and the natural mind. In the former, which consists of three discrete degrees that may be opened in succession, is a capacity for continual ascent. The spirit may rise from one plane to another, and in each acquires a new quality related only by correspondence to the other two. In contrast with this, the natural mind, typified by the root, whatever perfection it may attain, whatever its cultivation or enlargement by the refinements of literature, science, and art, is purely natural still, and ever remains so. Nature, indeed, has its three degrees as well as spirit; but they appear representative rather than actual degrees, and are all on the same plane. Thus there are three forms of matter, solid, fluid, and gaseous, but the gas is as merely material as the solid. So, too, the natural mind has its three representative degrees of knowledge, intelligence, and use; all on the same plane and the last as simply natural

as the first. Philosophers tell us that it is only heat, under certain conditions, that determines which of its three forms matter shall assume: so, also, the lower mental degrees are convertible into the higher by the warmth of natural affection; all the operations being natural from first to last. The highest excellence attainable by the natural mind is that of corresponding to the spiritual, so as to act voluntarily in agreement with it—to be a servant who loves to obey his master.

Attention has hitherto been directed to one only of the functions assigned to the root; but the other, that of being an instrument of nutrition, is equally important, and indeed they are exercised simultaneously. The largest tree receives that portion of its nourishment which is taken from the earth through its extremities exclusively. The outstretching rootlets, that extend laterally as far within the surface of the earth as the branches canopy it above, imbibe nothing in their course; but gather all their sustenance by the terminations of the fibrils, which consist of a loose absorbent tissue, connected with ducts and other vessels by which nutritious matters are absorbed from the earth and conveyed into the tree. Thus every extension of the root, each new fibril, is at once an additional organ of nutrition, as well as of support. So it is with us. Our appetites grow by what they feed on—their gratification adds to their intensity. Hence, any impulse once deliberately brought into its ultimate form by corresponding action, gains such an increase of strength that it is certain to demand renewed gratification, and almost as certainly with success. An inclination indulged is not only another fibril to sustain the affection it sprang from, but a new absorbent seeking its appropriate aliment. If

evil, it strengthens the evil influx and habit; if good, it nourishes a good affection, facilitates its descent into life and practice, and contributes to support all other good which may have been received.

The precise correspondence, however, of the absorbents of the root appears to be to the senses. By them all our knowledge of the external world is acquired. Indeed, all that is properly called knowledge, whether relating to spirit or matter, to things internal or external, reaches us through their instrumentality—through sight, hearing, touch, taste, and smell. They form the human, as the fibrils the vegetable extremities. Close but these avenues into nature, draw a curtain over the visual ray that reveals the variations of colour and form, the beautiful in nature and art, and the written thought of man; paralyse the nerve that conveys the tones of affection and the voice of instruction; blunt the perceptions of the delicate network spread over the surface of the body, by which the presence and consistency of substances are felt; make food insipid to the tongue, and odours inappreciable by the nostril; and even the cognizance of existence is lost; thought and feeling have become impossible; and the spirit is shut out from all exercise, voluntary or intellectual. That lowest, but most indispensable substratum of external knowledge is to the human spirit what the substances drawn from the earth are to the tree. These are water, and such mineral ingredients as that may hold in solution. But these substances, though necessary to its existence, are inadequate to the sustentation and growth of the tree. In the crude state in which they are raised from the earth they yield it no nutriment, and add neither to its size, beauty, nor pro-

ductiveness. To adapt it to these vital uses the application is required of the purer materials inhaled from the atmosphere by the leaves, and the action of the marvellous chemistry of which, as operatives in a laboratory, they are the agents. By them the ascending fluid is decomposed and purified, and its elements recombined and rearranged to form the descending sap on which its growth and fruitfulness, and all its products, whether organic or inorganic, depend. A similar order exists in the human mind, and analogous operations. The senses bring in large stores of facts which are accumulated in the memory; but the *man* cannot live and grow by these. How Cæsar fought and conquered, lived and died; the stellar distances; or the precise form and species of the animalcules deposited at the bottom of the ocean; and the entire collection of facts on which history and the various sciences are built;—what is there in these to nourish a living soul? Yet are they not unimportant elements of that liberal culture by which natural intelligence is acquired, and the intellect trained for the accomplishment of noble purposes. But to obtain this useful result, the higher faculties must act upon the acquisitions of the lower. The rational mind must bring into exercise its various powers, corresponding to the leaves of the tree; and a chemistry more wonderful than that of outward nature. By reflection, classification, and comparison facts are examined and analysed; then rearranged and sublimated; till from them are extracted rational conclusions and sound principles, adapted to the growth of the mind and the discharge of social functions: while the higher facts of spiritual science and of the letter of the Holy Word, by the alchemy of light from within,

are transmuted into 'fine gold' and the very 'elixir of life.'

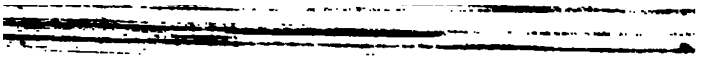
Another circumstance is noticeable: neither roots nor the senses possess any power of selection over the elements conveyed by the former into the tree, and by the latter into the memory. Roots admit all matters that are dissolved in the water they imbibe, however unsuited to the nature of the tree; and the senses necessarily receive everything that operates upon their respective planes. The eye cannot refuse to see, nor the ear to hear; and the exercise of the other senses is equally involuntary. But roots appear to have the means of excreting noxious substances; and the higher affections and perceptions of the mind can reject unseemly knowledge and facts from their inner recesses, and confine them to their seat in the outer chambers of the memory, there to be inactive and uninfluential.

A large and lofty tree requires a strong foundation and abundant nutriment; therefore both stem and root maintain a corresponding growth that a due proportion may exist between them. Hence, every year that adds a new layer of wood to its girth and a few feet to its height, adds also to the extent of the root and the number of its fibrils. On this mutual relation and just balance depend the grace and beauty, the permanence and productiveness of the tree. When a similar order is preserved in the spirit of man, the natural mind receives fresh accessions of truth externally through the senses; while the spiritual mind is fed by perennial streams of goodness from the Lord, descending from within: and the two influences meet in the nourishment afforded to each region, the internal and the external.

The one rises continually nearer to heaven in clear perceptions and pure affections, while the other acquires a broader grasp of the earth by their descent in good habits and tempers, and the just yet beneficent fulfilment of each day's humble duties.

Thus the tree stands, securely poised upon its root.

SHADOWS AND REFLEXIONS.



Shadows and Reflexions.

'A surface dappled o'er with shadows flung
From brooding clouds; shadows that lay in spots
Determined and unmoved, with steady beams
Of bright and pleasant sunshine interposed.

. . . . .

In a deep pool, by happy chance we saw
A twofold image; on a grassy bank
A snow-white ram, and in the crystal flood
Another and the same! Most beautiful,
On the green turf, with his imperial front
Shaggy and bold, and wreathèd horns superb,
The breathing creature stood; as beautiful,
Beneath him showed his shadowy counterpart.'

WORDSWORTH.

AT the first view of a summer, sun-illumined landscape, attention is usually confined to its general effect; and not till the eye has become familiar with this, does it turn to note the particular features that make up the harmonious whole. It then becomes apparent that the shadows by which it is varied contribute largely to the beauty of the scene. They fall across it from cloud, tree, rustic stile, or other object. The fleeting shadows cast by the clouds as they drift over the sky give it the interest and animation inseparable from movement; while those projected from the trees, with cattle closely

gathered within them for shelter from the sun's scorching rays, become resting-places for the eye and the imagination. We seek one of these comparatively cool retreats, thence leisurely to contemplate the view before us; and, seated on the root of a spreading tree, suffer the associated ideas which are excited to float past in succession, as a moving panorama. We muse on the time when, perhaps, a similar scene lay outspread beneath our admiring gaze; recall the circumstances that led our feet to stray thither, and linger affectionately over the many memories connected with it, including those of friends who shared our enjoyment in its various charms. From some of these we are separated by wide distances in space; while others have preceded us in the journey of life; have passed beyond the boundaries of time, and reached the Father's house before us. Then thought adverts to the shadows that fall over this lower life of ours; some of which pass quickly like those of light clouds dissolved by heat or dispersed by currents of wind. Others last through the day; changing form and direction as the hours advance, but always present till they are lost in the diffused shade of evening. Shadows contribute to the beauty of a landscape:—but how is it with the shadows of life? Can they add to the charm of existence? Such an idea is not readily admissible; for imagination usually pictures a happy life and land as absolutely shadowless: forgetting that the continual sunshine of a short summer's day overpowers us, and how gladly we seek a refuge from the heat in some sheltered spot. How then with the longer day of life? To be happy must it be wholly free from shadows?

A little reflection will enable us to perceive how plantless a desert human life would be were it always exposed to the glare of worldly prosperity : were buying and selling, gaining and spending money, business and pleasure, never interrupted by loss, sorrow, pain, bereavement, or other affliction. We are disposed to forget how much afflictive occurrences effect for us and in us ; how, on the one hand, they nourish the graces of patience, submission and resignation ; and, on the other, bend the stubborn will that would yield to nothing less compulsive than circumstances which cannot be evaded. Suffering, too, affects most beneficially the hearts of those who minister to its relief ; calling into activity the germs of tender pity and compassion implanted in our nature, that universal and unintermitting prosperity would enfeeble if not destroy. It is beyond dispute that health is to be sought and prized as one of the most valuable of natural blessings ; yet it cannot be denied that there is wonderful efficacy in bodily weakness and incapacity. What is there that so subdues the strivings of self-will, restrains the aspirations of ambition, and curbs the desire and effort to achieve great things for ourselves ? It is true there are natures whom such discipline only appears to harden ; but its normal effect is to soften and humble. Then, again, a common sorrow is a bond of union between all who are called to sustain it ; and a common misfortune leads to united effort and mutual sympathy. There is a natural sequence of pain, helpful commiseration, and love, constantly observable in human relations, and hearts not hardened in selfishness. Suffering awakens compassion, and compassion excites grateful affection. When Othello recites before the Venetian senate the 'unvarnished tale

of his whole course of love,' and how he wooed and won the gentle Desdemona, he thus concludes :

> ' She lov'd me for the dangers I had pass'd;
> And I lov'd her that she did pity them :'

A beautiful expression of a fact verified wherever man exists. When, therefore, we reflect how natural calamity in general tends to develope and strengthen by exercise, in one form or another, some of the best and most truly human qualities,—tenderness and self-denial, fortitude and devotedness ; when we remember the thoughtful care and kindness lavished on us in our individual experience of the hour of adversity ; it becomes evident that the absence of shadows would impair the value of existence as much as it would injure the beauty of a landscape.

Nor does the mission of adversity terminate with the results here attributed to it. Pain that destroys the capacity for enjoyment, accident or disease that leaves us helpless in the hands of others, losses in business, or the death of cherished relatives, by abating the strength of worldly affections, induce a temporary softening of the heart that disposes it to listen to the voice of truth speaking through the ear or the conscience. In this suspension of selfish activities angels can draw near and enkindle desires for higher advantages than the world offers ; for the wealth of heaven—the graces of obedience, charity, and love ; desires which it rests with us, when the time of trial is past, to stifle and subdue, or to cherish and mature. Considering, then, that as plants spring up in places kept moist by frequent shade, so affliction has its peculiar fruitage, we shall surely be willing to silence the disposition to murmur that occasional shadows lie across the path of life.

Continuing our meditations, we transfer the thought from earth to heaven ; and then pause to inquire whether there are shadows there. Undoubtedly, is the prompt reply. Wherever the natural sun shines there are shadows—as many shadows as there are objects to intercept the light. Wherever the heavenly sun shines there, too, are shadows —as many as there are human evils and imperfections. But evil is banished from heaven ; subdued and reduced to inactivity in all who enter within its gates. True, evil is quiescent in angelic minds ; but imperfection and infirmity are inseparable from finite existence ; and these have shadows, though lighter ones than those projected by evil. As every heavenly community consists of angels whose ruling loves are similar and accordant, one great cause of the want of harmony that not unfrequently prevails among good men is thereby removed : and they can combine with unity of feeling and principle in the performance of some use and function for which their love specially fits them. But the agreement of their governing principles does not abolish the thousand differences that distinguish one angel from another ; nor does it diminish the freedom of each to follow the bent of his peculiar constitution and disposition, and to pursue his individual ends and aims ; which the one love dominant in all impels toward the common end and general good of the society. There will, likewise, necessarily be great disparity in the degree of their heavenly attainments, in the measure of love and wisdom they respectively receive and exercise ; some receiving much and others little. Now the classes thus discriminated may come into relations that on earth are often attended with discord, from the absence of due mutual consideration, patience,

and forbearance. And it seems within the limits of possibility that circumstances may occur among beings who though angels are still imperfect, which might lead to inharmonious feeling and action, were it not for the influence of the gentle and pacific dispositions that have been acquired by regeneration : were it not for the tender, forbearing love of the better and wiser angels towards their less gifted brethren ; the respectful, deferential affection of these for their superiors ; and the supreme regard of all to the divine will. Hence, fleeting shadows may possibly diversify angelic life ; and, by this, only the more exquisitely adapt it to the state of those from whom they exist.

Admitting the presence of imperfection and infirmity in heaven, does it follow that pain and sorrow can exist there also ? It may be that they generalise too hastily who arrive at an absolutely negative reply to this inquiry ; at least as regards the lower and less perfect heavens. These being nearer the earth, and the internal state of their inhabitants not, perhaps, greatly superior to that of ordinary men in the world ; it is conceivable that there may be, in some particulars and to some degree, a corresponding resemblance in their outward condition likewise. Should there be something startling in the suggestion that so much imperfection is possible in heaven, still, it has its consolations also. There are multitudes of our fellow-creatures who, by the very conditions of their earthly life, can seldom transcend the animal plane of existence, and who pass their days in providing for its necessities. They are strangers to every species of knowledge that tends to elevate or ennoble ; ignorant alike of God and of all that constitutes true manhood ; but not destitute of natural good, and deriving

from their ignorance some measure of its concomitant innocence. The rational mind refuses to believe that by anything short of a miracle that would reduce them to the level of automata, can such as these be fitted for the exalted purity and beatitude characteristic of the superior heavens, and which many are accustomed to associate with the inferior ones likewise. How satisfactory then is the thought, that for those whose ignorance and moral deficiency are involuntary and unavoidable, a better state is provided, though one overshadowed by the nature contracted on earth: that relieved from the impediments of materiality, and instructed in the few simple elements of truth and goodness they are capable of accepting, even these may be received into those liberal heavens which exclude none who can breathe within them! Others, also, not entitled to plead ignorance in excuse of the evils and errors, faults and follies they are conscious of, and which seem a barrier between them and the heavenly mansions, may find relief in the thought that among them are humbler abodes that open even to the small measure of good which such as they have realised: where, though in the less vital, sensitive, or influential organs of the Grand Man, they may make part of the general brotherhood of the redeemed. But, whatever the actual fact in angelic experience, it does not strictly belong to the subject before us; for, though shadows are pleasing poetic similes of afflictive events, the latter are not their true spiritual correspondents.

Time passes quickly with minds engaged in thought. The sun has traversed a large arc of the heavens since our meditations were begun; and the shadow cast by the leafy tree-branches which screened us from the heat has altered

its direction, compelling a similar change of position on our part. From our new situation the scene wears another aspect, and presents different features to view. Immediately in front lies a tranquil lake of limpid water. The modesty of truth would, perhaps, call it a pond. It matters not:—lake or pond—it is partly fringed by rushes, partly bordered by trees. A few cows, too, have wandered thither and stand within it, enjoying its cooler temperature; and, to appearance, musing like ourselves. Rushes, trees, cows, the blue sky, and the floating clouds are reflected in it; were it near enough we could see our own image also. How striking the contrast between shadows and reflexions! The one not so much clothed in darkness, as consisting of it; the other wearing the colours of nature. Yet both are representations of the same objects—repeating them more or less exactly. What then is the primary distinction between them? The essence of a shadow—if the expression may be applied, or misapplied, to that which has no positive existence, to a mere negation—is the exclusion of the great reality light, and the heat it contains and conveys. Reflexions, on the contrary, originate in its reception; and in its being so received that the receptive object becomes itself a source of light. It is seen by the rays it transmits to the eye of the beholder, and, when a mirror is at hand, repeats its own image there. Spiritual shadows and reflexions are similarly produced; the light coming from the sun of heaven, the shade from human evil, infirmity, or ignorance.

Heaven is eminently the region of reflexions, though, as we have seen, shadows are not excluded. The shadows of evil are absent, it is true; but those of imperfection and, especially, of ignorance are necessarily present there, as

everywhere else: for in the vast universe of God the known is to the unknown as a drop of water to the ocean. An angel is surrounded by outward representations of his affections of goodness and principles of truth. Everything about him and belonging to him is, in a certain sense, an image of himself, reflecting the form and colour of his mind; and is thus in harmony with his feelings and perceptions; is adapted to his use, and conducive to his happiness. It may seem that, so circumstanced, he would be ever engaged in the complacent contemplation of himself in the corresponding objects around; as, in the resorts of fashion, a vain beauty gazes on her own image in the mirrors that decorate the walls. Far from this being the fact, seeing in them the gifts of love and wisdom he has received, they become only so many records of the divine bounty; incentives to humility and gratitude. The opposite kingdom is distinctively the region of shadows: and while all infernal spirits dwell in the general obscurity resulting from their aggregate evils, each one lives more particularly within the shadow of his own—overshadowed by himself! Every evil is as impervious to spiritual light as the bole of a tree is to natural sunshine; and, by this exclusion, the falsities flowing from it become visible in monstrous forms of darkness. By these falsities each unhappy spirit protects his ruling evil affection from influences that would torment him if admitted; and works out by them the ends to which it impels him. Between these two kingdoms are the dwellers upon earth, free to choose a final abode in either; and, till the choice is definitely made, there are both shadows and reflexions in the mind of every individual of the human race.

We will consider the shadows first, as brought into view by experience or observation. There are few who cannot recollect the difficulty with which they were led to admit the truth of some unwelcome principle, or equally unwelcome fact, affecting the interests either of the external or the internal life, or, possibly, of both. Why were truths clearly visible to an unprejudiced by-stander imperceptible to them? The difficulty arose from the shadows in which they were involved. The falsities or fallacious reasonings, originating in the strong feeling or desire by which they were animated, actually shut out the light from them. Their own wishes stood between themselves and it, and they saw but the images of these depicted in shade; seductive falsity in the place of truth. What blinds keen-sighted men of business to the obviously ruinous tendency and absolute dishonesty of some of the insane speculations they engage in? Simply the ardent longing for success; the intensity of the desire to increase in wealth, or to achieve or sustain a certain social position. Were self-interest subordinate, and the love of just dealing supreme, light from that love would not fail to show the real nature of a delusive project and its probable results. But strong passion so vitiates the judgment that under its influence the barest possibilities acquire the force of certainty; while the suggestions of principle, prudence, or probability are unheard. A distinct shadow, also, accompanies each of the numerous race of worldly or selfish affections, disguising its true character. No one admits that a disposition which he persists in indulging is evil. It may be evil in another, or under other circumstances; but for him, and as the latter now exist, he sees it to be allowable; and

like Jonah, for instance, he will maintain, 'I do well to be angry.' As in the previous examples, the evil in the will casts its shadow over the understanding, so as to exclude the light which seeks to enter it.

The prejudicial effects of the shadows of ignorance are generally acknowledged; though they are less dense than the shadows of evil, and less injurious to the individual. The transgressions of him who knew not his lord's will are visited with but few stripes. That they meet with any is an intimation, that though involuntary ignorance mitigates the evil committed in its shade, it does not so nullify it as to leave a capacity for the opposite good; spiritual good entering only when evil is ejected. Then, again, ignorance of the qualities of persons, or the properties of things dealt with, and other necessary conditions of success in the various occupations of life, is one of the greatest obstacles to natural progress: and though knowledge without a will to employ it for useful ends is not beneficial to society, the utmost benevolence of intention is powerless without it.

Turning from shadows to reflexions and their analogies, the first thought that presents itself is, that there is only one natural mirror in creation. Mirrors may be manufactured from various natural substances; but the only one in existence ready formed, without aid from the hand of man, is a basin or stream of pure water. Running water is a most lovely accessory of fine scenery. Without its presence in some form, as babbling brook, rapid torrent, calm lake, or peaceful river, no scene is felt as completely satisfactory; for it adds new beauty, and gives new meanings to its other details, and awakens new associations. Not these associations, however, agreeable as it might be to follow them to

an issue, but the images water is capable of reflecting, claim our present attention. Their production appears a simple operation, though recondite laws are involved in it. Light from the sun falls on objects duly situated, and they transmit it and their own image to the adjacent pool. Light is the symbol of spiritual truth, water of natural truth ; and the latter reflects the former on a lower plane ; is a visible and tangible image of it accommodated to man. How great a change it undergoes in the translation from the upper to the lower plane, is clearly intimated in the defective quality of the image as compared with the object ; for similarly defective are natural conceptions of spiritual truth. The same may be said of the two degrees of life, spiritual and natural; the one being represented in the other and brought down to the sphere of the senses in the physical creation. There is a similar relation also between man's internal and external mind ; the principles which exist as affections and perceptions in the inner mind becoming deeds and words in the outer. The perfection, the accuracy of the reflexion, however, is dependent on the perfection and purity of the mirror—on the clearness and tranquillity of the water. Wind disturbs it ; mud stirred up from beneath effaces it. Only the purified external mind, whence pride, passion, and kindred evils have been expelled, and their reign succeeded by peace and serenity, gives faithful reflexions of the affections and perceptions of the internal. Not till there is harmony between them can the reflexions be perfect. The images reflected in the tranquil basin before us appear, then, to correspond to a good external life proceeding from the gifts of charity and faith in the internal man.

Not restricting our observations to images repeated in comparatively perfect mirrors, of which so few are extant; a more general view may be taken, so as to include reflexions of all kinds, whatever their degree of imperfection: such, for example, as are distorted, blurred, or diffused by the action of wind on the surface, so that only a vague resemblance is retained; and others that are partially, sometimes almost wholly, effaced by the mingling with the water of mud from a miry bottom. Reflexions under this larger treatment correspond to every kind and degree of active goodness exhibited by men, whether under the impulse of natural feeling, from obedience to principles of duty, or from affections of charity. Nothing to which the name of goodness is in any way applicable is self-derived, or the property of man himself. It is all received from the one Source of good:—received in small quantity and defectively transmitted or reflected; partly suffocated by evil and selfishness; partly disfigured or wholly marred by the storms of passion; but all of good that remains is a gift received, and its exercise is a reflexion of the Giver. Our affections seem so absolutely our own, to be so much a part of ourselves, that there is difficulty in realising the fact that, like life itself, they come to us from our heavenly Father; our good affections being His love descending to us through angelic media; our evil affections the same love corrupted and contaminated by passing through infernal media; but neither properly belonging to us till they are freely appropriated in heart and life. Thus, natural goodness is very literally a transcript of heavenly—of divine—goodness. The natural affections for kindred and friends, the higher and wider affections of the spiritual mind, are so many faint re-

flexions of the Lord's love and mercy to His creatures, received and transmitted by them according to their capacities and states. Thus the world is illumined and warmed by mirrors reflecting light and radiating heat. By passing through other minds and sustaining some modification in each, these two great elements of life are conveyed to every individual in the form and of the quality that are best suited to his wants : and this mediate distribution of the divine bounty becomes the means of binding human beings together by the interchange of mutual benefits.

It is not easy to imagine a state of society utterly different from the reality, and not wise to allow thought to dwell long on impossible conditions : but as we can only justly estimate the value of things as they are, by gaining some idea of what we should lose were they differently arranged, let us very briefly consider what an arid wilderness life would be, were our necessities supplied and our enjoyments bestowed immediately by the divine hand, without the intervention of other human beings ;—were there, that is, no natural reflexions of the divine goodness. Human relations are attended by so many cares, anxieties, and responsibilities that, possibly, we seldom duly recognise the inconceivable benefits and blessings which they are the instruments of conveying. How much would be lost to mankind if children, for instance, were independent of parental care and tenderness, and, like some animals, capable of providing for themselves from the moment of birth ; if parents needed no responsive solicitude and love ; if the fraternal tie had no corresponding feelings and duties ; if the central relation of husband and wife were devoid of its interchange of tender offices and influences,

pervading the life of each! Without family relations and others that arise out of them no human affections would be exercised or, indeed, exist: and without human love and goodness no sense or knowledge of the divine love would be attainable. Humanity itself would be an impossibility; and man could never rise above his mere animal nature.

By separating in our conceptions human from divine goodness; by failing to recognise it as a derivative from that, as, indeed, divine goodness itself in the precise form required by the recipient; and enriched only with greater blessings by being given through the medium of other beings like ourselves, we lose the sense we might have of the constant activity and presence of the divine love. The heart is warmed towards those through whom either great advantages or small gratifications and pleasures are bestowed; and it is right that such a state of feeling, which doubles the satisfaction experienced, should be attendant on benefits received. But deeper thankfulness would be enkindled towards the Father of all good were it remembered that the greatest and the least benefits are in reality His gifts, conveyed by others as His agents. It has been well said that 'receiving and giving are the two great functions of life:' yet there are frequent impediments to the right discharge of either of them; human infirmity interfering with their simple and natural exercise. The ability to give, especially to give largely, sometimes tends to produce a self-complacent feeling of superiority, and of satisfaction in one's own generosity; though its exercise is nearly as often unjustly ascribed to such motives by the illiberal mind: while receiving is liable to induce meanness or avidity, or

to excite a painful sense of inferiority and dependence. But when giver and receiver both refer the gift to its primary Source, the one bestowing and the other accepting as from Him, no such feelings can enter the mind of either; but each feels it as the true order of life to receive with one hand and give with the other.

There is a law referring to the reflexion of light which is thus expressed: 'The angle of incidence is equal to the angle of reflexion and lies in the same plane.' It would not be easy to state the corresponding spiritual law so simply and definitely; and impossible at present to elaborate its particulars: but we may venture upon some indications of its general significance. That the angle of incidence is equal to the angle of reflexion probably points to the truth, that the conceptions we form of divine and heavenly things, and of their Author, accord with our own states and the quality of the will in each individual. We see the Lord not as He actually is, but as the heart paints Him; ascribing to Him the qualities that exist in us. Thus 'to the upright He shows Himself upright; but to the froward He shows Himself froward.' The understanding only learns to see the truth that God is love, in proportion as the heart feels it in the love received from Him. To make God visible to themselves men draw the likeness of their own corruptions; and hence have originated the horrid forms in which heathen nations have embodied their apprehensions of deity. Only as we attain some resemblance of the Lord can we rise towards right conceptions of His nature.

The natural fact under consideration involves, also, another meaning, and indicates that human reflexions of

divine qualities are in strict agreement with the measure and manner in which they are received. The virtues that characterise the life reflect the graces admitted into the heart. The degree in which we are pure, patient, and merciful measures the purity, patience, and mercy we have accepted from the Lord their Source. What is not thus reflected is not in reality received; it being impossible to store up unused gifts of love and wisdom, as superabundant earthly riches may be amassed. The goodness we exercise or embody in practice we actually receive and make our own—exactly so much and no more.

Again: the angle of incidence and the angle of reflexion are not only equal, but they lie in the same plane. This appears to refer to the manner rather than to the measure of reception. Natural and spiritual affections have respectively natural and spiritual issues. If the Lord's outflowing love is received in the natural mind alone it will be reflected only on that plane, and exhibited in merely natural affections and a regard for temporal objects and external gratifications. When it is received in the spiritual mind also it is reflected in spiritual affections of charity. Goodness and truth are the objects to which they are directed, and these heavenly principles are sought that the recipient may in his finite degree be himself good and true and a channel of goodness and truth to his neighbour.

In following the train of thought suggested by the shadows and reflexions before us, we have omitted to notice the objects from which they respectively proceed—that project the former and transmit the latter. Yet there must necessarily be a definite relation between each object and its own shadow and reflexion, for it is attended by both;

and, also, between the shadow and the reflexion themselves. There must be a relation, that is, between the different analogues of each. Every distinct thing existing in the natural universe, as we have already had occasion to notice, corresponds to something in man; to some power, faculty, quality, function, or other attribute, derived to him from his heavenly Father, and promotive in him of the divine image in which he was created. The objects themselves appear to represent this attribute in its true order as originally designed by the Creator; while the shadow typifies man's inaccurate, defective, or erroneous conceptions of its nature and obligations; and the reflexion his unfaithful or imperfect discharge of them. An imperfect spiritual reflexion is the inevitable concomitant of a dark and distorted shadow. Erroneous conceptions of duty unavoidably result in its defective performance; and the more faithfully the error is followed the more faulty would be the practice, were it not for the power of sincere and upright intentions to moderate intellectual obscurity: as shadows become faint in the full radiance of daylight. The lighter the shadows, the more brilliant the reflexions, in man individually and collectively, the nearer the approach to the order of heaven; where the shadows gradually fade, and the reflexions become continually more accurate and luminous.

THE AIR WE BREATHE.

The Air we Breathe.

'Fly, if you can, the violent extremes
Of air; the wholesome is nor moist nor dry.
But as the power of choosing is denied
To half mankind, a further task ensues;
How best to mitigate these fell extremes,
How breathe unhurt the withering element,
Or hazy atmosphere.'

ARMSTRONG.

THE great increase of population during the present century has rendered imperative an attention to certain sanatory conditions which previously might more safely be neglected; or, if the neglect was fatal then, as now, the result was not traced to its actual causes; which were little thought of, or, indeed, scarcely known. The remains that time has spared of venerable regal and noble residences bear witness, in narrow chambers with diminutive apertures for air and light, how little our forefathers felt the importance of either element. The disregard, too, was universal; for what was slighted by a grade of society wealthy enough to procure all appliances and conveniences considered desirable, was equally neglected by its humbler members. Our earlier sovereigns retired from a Painted Chamber more splendid, and a Hall at Westminster more

vast, than modern princes build either for state or pleasure, to sleeping-rooms that their servants would now refuse to occupy. The true nature of respiration was a gradual, and in its completeness—so far as at present advanced—is a recent discovery; and at no previous date could the necessity for a due supply of air, in regard to both quantity and quality, be distinctly recognised. Even now, when minds of only ordinary culture are more or less familiar with the subject; and artificial ventilation has become a science; knowledge and conviction powerful enough to influence practice has not penetrated the great mass of the people.

Air to breathe is as indispensable as food to eat. The body dies if deprived of either; and health is as dependent on a due supply of the one as of the other. It is true, air does not like food enter into and compose the actual substances of the material frame; but it is the great agent for purifying the vital fluid formed from the food, by which every organ—to its least fibre or cell—is built up: and while thus employed, in the very process by which the purification of the blood is effected, it ministers to the support of animal heat. A distinction may here be noticed. Food is taken voluntarily; and we can determine both its quality and quantity, or abstain from it altogether; instances being on record of persons who have wilfully starved themselves to death. But breathing is an involuntary act. By no effort of the will can we avoid imbibing air wherever it is present, be its quality what it may. Air being, as just observed, as necessary as food, respiration is as essential to life as the circulation of the blood; indeed, the two functions are intimately connected and mutually dependent on each other.

Atmospheric air is everywhere present. It not only surrounds the body externally, but penetrates within it and to all its organs. It mingles with our food, and acts upon all the substances we use. Nothing but life resists its action; while dead matters are sooner or later decomposed by it. Though a few fractions of other substances are mingled in it, yet, its essential elements are only two—oxygen and nitrogen; and these in the invariable proportion—estimated by volume—of one to four; or—by weight—of 23 parts in 100 to 77. 'Taken from whatever part of the world, or whatever elevation;—brought from the highest mountains, from the sea-side, or from the centre of the most densely-populated town, the general proportion of nitrogen and oxygen is very nearly the same.' The differences observable in its quality in different situations do not, therefore, arise from any alteration in the proportion of these its essential elements, but from additions to them. Of these additions aqueous vapour is the most remarkable, being always present, though variable in quantity and density; intimately mixed with it, yet separable from it, as a distinct substance. Other additions which chiefly contribute to determine its quality are the various impurities with which it may be laden. Among these the results of animal and vegetable decomposition are conspicuous: and scarcely less so the noxious vapours exhaled in the processes of human industry. Much, too, depends on the freedom of circulation kept up in the aerial sphere by the winds. Unenclosed air may thus be moist, warm, enervating, and more or less impure; or dry, bracing, and exhilarating, or otherwise differ in quality: while in crowded, unventilated rooms, where the quantity is insufficient for

the consumption of its occupants, it becomes suffocating from the deficiency of oxygen; and poisonous from the vitiated results of respiration, and the not inconsiderable amount of morbid organic matter—part of the effete matter of the body—which is exhaled with the breath.

Neither of the gases which compose the air can be separately inhaled with safety to life: and though in quantity the nitrogen is greatly in excess of the oxygen; yet, respiration is supported by the latter alone. The use of the former, as at present recognised by physiologists, is so to dilute the oxygen as to adapt it for inhalation, and for its functions in the animal economy.

The bare recital of these particulars is suggestive of many highly interesting inquiries and speculations: but in the absence of authoritative information on the subject, it is difficult to see the exact correspondence of the elements of atmospheric air; and hazardous to indulge in conjecture. Yet the universality of its presence and the permanence of its composition;—unaffected as that permanence is by human will or work;—the relative proportion and inseparability in respiration of its elements;—directing thought, as by instinct, to the two great elements of spiritual life;—are suggestive of the inference that it may correspond to some universal form of goodness and truth which is necessary to man in every condition, irrespective of his quality; which like sunshine and rain is needed and appropriated alike by the evil and the good; some adaptation of it without which his spirit could no more exist than his body without the material atmosphere. Nature, however, besides its higher correspondences, is full of analogies, variously gradated, with the spiritual and social life of man;

and among them one of the most obvious is that of the material to the mental and social atmosphere that environs us all. What the common air we breathe is to the body, the prevalent tone of thought and feeling in the world at large, and more particularly in that small portion of it that constitutes our own special world, is to the spirit.

Every age has its distinctive features;—its accepted religious doctrines and observances, its standard of morals, its degree of intelligence: and the wise and considerate, when estimating the worth of individuals who passed long centuries ago from the earthly sphere of existence, suspend their judgment till they have recalled the character of the times they lived in, and their received standard of right and wrong. The martyrs of religion and science are men whose clear vision discerns truths—natural or spiritual—hidden from ordinary sight; men beyond their age, whose efforts to improve it are ever rewarded with resistance and contumely, when not with persecution and death. All the instruction which reaches us, except that immediately derived from the Scriptures; all the influences that mould our hearts, except those descending immediately from above; are modified by the spirit of the age: because the channels through which they are conveyed are formed, in a greater or less degree, in accordance with it. Pulpit teaching is coloured by the same agency; general literature, especially in its more popular forms, reflects it accurately and vividly. So, also, do the daily avocations and charities of life; its social habits; its forms of language and business; even its modes of beneficence. In short, nothing escapes its operation; and everything that resists deterioration under it succeeds only in proportion to the energy of

its vital principles. Only life—natural or spiritual—can resist the decaying, decomposing activities of either atmosphere. We are thus liable to its effects because we are not only immersed in it, but formed in agreement with it : and, in return, we contribute our modicum towards making it what it is. We are unconscious, too, of its direct action ; and its consequences only become perceptible after long intervals, as we pause to discover the reason of some failure of vital power, or of some morbid activity. As few of us can select or control the quality of the air we live in, but must breathe it whatever its quality may be ; so neither can we escape the influence of the spirit of the age. It weighs us all down towards the common level: and it would appear that a general elevation of that is required, before any very eminent examples of superior goodness may be expected.

The spirit of the present age is its love of money, and of the pleasures, and pre-eminent luxury in dress, household appointments, and style of living that money can purchase. We measure others by their wealth and social advantages, irrespective of their actual quality ; and, with equally mischievous results, weigh ourselves in the same false balances ; and feel abased or elated by the neglect or attention of persons of higher worldly pretensions than ours, even when the pretension implies no mental or moral superiority. Or —another form of the same infirmity—we stand proudly aloof from those above us, as if their higher position excluded them from our sympathies. Talent, intellectual culture, discovery, and invention are valued less for their use to the individual possessor, or to society at large, than for the money for which they are exchangeable. There are, indisputably, many honourable exceptions. Nor is it less in-

disputable that natural gifts and acquired talents may lawfully and laudably be employed for the attainment of wealth and position—these being capable of so many eminently useful applications. The principle maintained is simply, that riches should be valued for their use, not use for an equivalent in gold. This spirit of the age acts on the dead principles of the natural mind and breeds corruption. Rank forms of death arise: pride, arrogance, and contempt on the one hand; on the other, repining discontent, corroding anxieties, and rivalry that impairs actual comfort in attempts at useless display. All this, and more and worse than this, is observable in the familiar paths of private life: while the broad areas of public business are disgraced by fraud and peculation; wide-spreading commercial failure and distress; and a stigma falling upon names that for generations had been honoured and honourable.

Over this spirit of the age the individual possesses as much power as a single drop of water has over the vast ocean, and no more: in plainer words, he is powerless. Not so, however, is he in what we have called his own special world—the smaller circle of friends and associates with whom he mingles upon terms of greater or less intimacy and familiarity; where he is not as a mere inconsiderable atom, but has his admitted influence and importance. Here, if he cannot lead, he may modify the prevailing tone of morals and opinion; here his sentiments and character have weight in either impelling or restraining. This lesser world is as an apartment he has means of ventilating. When conscious of impurity he can open a window—possibly a window towards the east—and let in both air and sunshine. Or, if unable to do this, he can seek elsewhere a healthier

atmosphere. Circumstances to a considerable extent determine our companions and associates: but in general we have a negative when not a positive power; and can avoid if we cannot select, restrain when we cannot improve; or retire from an uncongenial sphere where we neither confer nor receive benefit. Many persons are wholly unobservant or unconscious of the influence exercised over them by the character of their habitual associates; how, by a kind of moral necessity strictly analogous to that by which they breathe the air around them, they imbibe a similar spirit, adopt similar views, and are gradually actuated by similar feelings. Nay, society would lose its charm, because its tendency to unity and harmony, were it otherwise. How 'cabined, cribbed, confined' are the feelings, thoughts, and enjoyments that cannot be communicated to others and shared with them! All but the stronger or more expansive natures are chilled and repressed by the absence of sympathy in their pursuits; while its presence intensifies delight and enhances the value of what is most esteemed. It might be expected that the action referred to would affect only things of little moment, or attachments seated on the surface of the mind without roots deep in the affections; and that the interior principles which belong to us as moral and spiritual beings would be secure from extraneous influence. But the fact appears to be otherwise. Some degree of interest is lost in subjects of even the highest importance when they have no opportunity of utterance, or awake no responsive feeling in the hearts of our companions; and insensibly they become supplanted in our affections by others of inferior quality. For it is at all times easier to sink than to rise; because while this is

effected by acquired power, that is a natural tendency. For a similar reason it is easier to follow others in their accustomed path than to be pioneers of new principles. Besides, the higher life of the mind is as a stream, that to be kept fresh and pure must flow onward and outward in proportion to the quantity of the inflowing element. Without an outlet it becomes stagnant; contracts perhaps a deleterious quality, and, at best, ceases to be fertilising.

It being admitted that all must partake of the spirit of the times they live in, and belong to their own age; it becomes a subject for inquiry how protection may best be found from the deteriorating action of the moral atmosphere around us. It appears to affect us most directly through the society we mix with and the books we read. Argument is needless to prove that no good is attainable by living in retirement like anchorites. Even restriction to a narrow circle tends to contract the mind, and infuse a spirit of intolerance. Nor can we mingle in general society fully equipped in defensive armour, as in preparation for an expected assault upon our principles. In relation to books, also, it is obvious all cannot read critically, nor can any exercise the critical faculty at all times. Some writer remarks that there is a sort of humanity even in a book, which yields its choicest qualities only to generous treatment, candour, and sympathy. Thus, in regard to both literature and society, we must often surrender ourselves confidingly to the companion of the hour—whether present in flesh and bones, or in paper and morocco—to extract the best he may have to communicate. Safety, then, must be otherwise sought than in suspicion and restraint: and as it is through our dead principles that we are liable

to injury, our resource appears to lie in strengthening our vitality. Inquire of a physician the best means of preserving health when living habitually in bad air. His reply is: 'Eat good food and attend to your digestion; take exercise, and get into good air whenever it is practicable;' and these directions translated into spiritual ideas will, perhaps, indicate the course to adopt.

Good food which supports the life of the body corresponds to the direct means of sustaining the life of the spirit;—to voluntary and deliberate efforts for the attainment of goodness and truth. Among these are the study of the Scriptures and of other books founded upon them; prayer, and the ordinances of public worship. Digestion is analogous to the process of assimilation, by which this spiritual food is taken into the system and becomes part of our substance. Briefly summarised, it includes reflection, and application to individual state and character of the instruction and good influences received. While exercise, which implies energy, effort, and activity, symbolises the employment in outward uses and duties of the strength and vigour thus recruited. Spiritual health is by these means attained and supported: and one of the attributes of health is facility in rejecting noxious influences of every kind; and among others those of impure air. But, underlying this ability to throw off such impurities of will and thought as may meet us in social intercourse or general literature, is the delicacy of perception by which their presence is detected. This refined sensibility is familiar to most of us in relation to objects of special interest to the external mind. A cultivated ear easily distinguishes a slightly discordant note in music, or a defective rhythm in poetry; an eye ac-

customed to tasteful associations of colour instantly recognises an incongruous tint; and these organs possess this capacity because they have been trained to delight in harmonious combinations of sound and of colour. Though love itself has no power of sight, it discerns by a more interior sense, a quicker, surer faculty than that of vision, the approach of uncongenial influences; while, at the same time, nothing else so vivifies all the other faculties, or so elicits their capabilities. Like the light touch of Ithuriel's spear it penetrates and dissipates all disguises. This sensibility to evil and error is the securest protection against them, and he who possesses it scarcely needs any other defence. And minds not capable of clear intellectual analysis, by the love of the good and the true cultivated in the manner assumed, may acquire an intuitive perception of an opposing presence when, perhaps, unable distinctly to see in what it consists.

To place us more completely out of danger, however, our physician recommended purer air, when it can be obtained. This leads to the consideration of what constitutes good air in the sense now intended by the expression. Good air exists wherever there are good people. This epithet is not designed to include a large class on whom it is not unfrequently bestowed;—persons who may be good-natured and good-tempered, and lead decent external lives; but who, whether religious professors or not, rest in mere natural good, with little reference to a law above themselves in either heart or mind. They partake too much of the spirit of the age to assist any one in rising above it. Good people, rightly so called, are they who, from sincere and earnest religious principles, are thoughtfully endeavour-

ing to realise the precepts of the gospel in their lives; and who, by strenuous conflict with their native evils, are acquiring a capacity for the reception of spiritual good. With varied measure of success they aim to be pure, truthful, and upright; self-denying, unworldly, and compassionate; in a word, to love the Lord and their neighbour. This aim, so far as it is realised, elevates the whole character, the whole mind and life; and it is such as these who breathe out good air into the world to renovate the age. Their influence, too, is all the greater from being, like that of the common air, exercised imperceptibly.

In attributing this importance to the good acquired by regeneration, there is no intention either to undervalue truth, or to countenance the idea that it is of little consequence whether the mind be formed from true or erroneous, not to say false, principles. It is, on the contrary, of immense importance to the individual that he embrace genuine truth instead of falsity, and of scarcely less moment to society: for good exists within truth as its essence and is developed from it; is, in fact, truth realised and made actual. The mission of the genuine truths of the new dispensation, a mission nothing else is competent to fulfil, is to renew and regenerate the world throughout its length and breadth. As new light on all subjects, high or low, they are the instruments by which the divine promise to 'make all things new' is being fulfilled. But it is not as light—as truth—that they possess the power of insensible beneficent action attributable to good air. To acquire this it is not sufficient that they are taught, understood, and believed; they must be lived and loved and converted into good; elevated out of the understanding into the heart:

and only so much of the truth received as is thus translated tends to the production of good air—of a new spirit of action in society.

The truth that is outwardly communicable is consciously and voluntarily received. It enters the mind not as air but as food; and passes through processes analogous to all those which aliment undergoes before it enters the blood and becomes part of the living human body. Till these are accomplished the food that is consumed adds nothing to its life, strength, health, or capacity for action. But when it has been recruited from the blood, the effects of the nutrient properties of the substances taken as food are displayed in every word and deed—become actually appreciable by the senses. All truth, on any subject, sacred or secular, is similarly circumstanced. In the individual mind, or in the world at large, it has no actual value till it passes through the stages of thought and speech into deeds; that is, into use. When anything that is seen to be just and right, suitable and desirable, arrives at the further stage of being done, that particular truth is fixed in act; it becomes silently influential—for no further agitation or discussion is required—and society enjoys the benefit of it. For example: new discoveries or improvements in medicine, mechanics, manufactures, or art, are simply natural truths seen by the intellect; but are of no benefit to the world till they are applied to use in new processes. Their principles then enter the common life of the community; and the thoughtful minds to whom they are attributable pass onward to new discoveries. We are apt to think that spiritual phenomena and experience are things apart, and of a recondite nature not related to

the visible world around us. But, in fact, spiritual and natural life are governed by perfectly corresponding laws; laws that are simple repetitions of each other on different planes of being. The conversion, for instance, of the truth that prescribes forgiveness of injuries into good, by habitual resistance to a retaliative spirit till a placable, forgiving disposition is acquired; is precisely analogous to the application to use of a newly-discovered natural truth in some economic art: and neither the spiritual nor the natural truth benefits the individual or the community excepting in the degree in which it is embodied in use; use and good being equivalent terms. If nature and spirit, earth and heaven, were not thus linked together by correspondent action and phenomena, how could the lower condition, by any possibility, be a training for the higher?

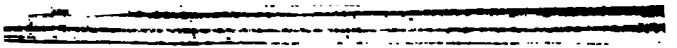
That particular species of influence exercised by goodness realised in the will which is typified by the healthful action of pure air is, however, distinct from the sensible effects and benefits of an outward life of goodness. It lies within these, and reaches neither eye nor ear, nor any of the senses; but acts immediately upon the affections; upon such of them, at least, as are responsive and prepared to receive it. It is communicated by the spiritual contact of accordant minds; or of that in each which is accordant in its nature. It is the spiritual life of the individual making itself perceptible to other minds, and attracting to itself all the good existing in them. It consists literally of

'An ampler ether, a diviner air,'

that invigorates the internal man, as a pure atmosphere exhilarates and restores the life of the body. And in proportion as it is generated and diffused, higher sanatory

conditions will prevail in society, and healthy individual life be more easily maintained. At present, nearly all external influences are of an adverse nature; and spiritual progress is not effected without struggling against outward obstacles, as well as inward enemies; being in opposition to the general current of thought and feeling, which sets in a contrary direction. But every one who by regeneration is acquiring spiritual good, adds the efficacy of his own life to the new heavenly influx that is being poured into the world; and thus makes its attainment less difficult to those around him. The main current will long flow steadily down towards worldly aims: yet, even now, feebler ones from new and slender streams are discernible, that take a different course; and as these gradually gather strength they will carry us on—aiding instead of retarding—towards the true ends of existence.

THE STARRY HEAVENS.



The Starry Heavens.

'He telleth the number of the stars; He calleth them all by their names.'—PSALM cxlvii.

SWEDENBORG, in one of his Memorable Relations, narrates the substance of a conversation with some angelic associates, which not only agreeably illustrates the intellectual equality that characterised his intercourse with certain individual angels, but is in itself of a highly interesting nature. He 'was walking'—or, perhaps, according to a familiar colloquial expression, taking a walk—in the world of spirits in company with some angels, engaged in the discussion of various subjects; and he calls their attention to the fact, that in the world to which he belongs as to his bodily life the skies at night are strewn with innumerable stars of different magnitudes;—stars that in reality are suns. He observes a similar appearance of stars in the visible heavens of the world of spirits, and communicates to his companions the conjecture that 'possibly they may be as many in number as in the natural world.' The angels readily accept this idea, and suggest arguments in corroboration of it. There appears, however, to be a link in the chain of reasoning left unexpressed, and to be supplied by the reader before its validity can be perceived. Swedenborg and the angels

are speculating on probabilities;—will it be presumptuous in his readers to indulge in the same mental exercise, and conjecturally to interpolate the missing link? A clause apparently necessary to complete the sense being supplied, the passage will read thus: 'The angels, being much delighted with this discourse, replied, that perhaps the numbers were equal, since every society in heaven shines sometimes like a bright star before those who stand below in the world of spirits; and that the heavenly societies are innumerable, all regulated and arranged according to the variety of the affections of the love of good, which are infinite in God, and consequently by derivation from Him are innumerable; and as these were foreseen before creation began, [and as each natural star or sun corresponds to some specific heavenly affection,] therefore there is reason to imagine, that according to their variety, an equal number of stars was provided, that is created, in the world where men were to live in a material natural body.'—T.C.R., 160.

It is difficult to resist the conclusion that the angelic argument contains the idea of a correspondence of some sort between heavenly and natural stars; and the one suggested has the sanction of the New Church Writings, in which it is expressly declared that the stars correspond to 'the societies of heaven and their habitations.' Now it cannot for a moment be imagined that the correspondence is with these societies considered merely as aggregations of human beings dwelling together in certain allotted mansions in heaven: because then the relation would be purely arbitrary; and might subsist between any star and any angelic society; an idea that excludes the essential prin-

ciple of correspondence, which involves some necessary connection between corresponding entities. In the present case, however utterly incapable our faculties may be to conceive or to understand its nature, the relation—the correspondence—must surely be to that which discriminates these angelic communities and the individuals who compose them, from other communities and other individuals; to that by which they are united together so as to constitute a society,—one of the lesser heavens: and this is the specific quality of their ruling love,—that precise variety of the 'affection of the love of good' which is paramount in them individually and collectively.

Angels and good men are images and likenesses of God, but each in a way peculiar to himself. They all reflect the divine perfections faintly and imperfectly, but each reflects them differently from his brethren; according to the original constitution of his mind and his acquired state of receptivity. These differences may be compared to the reflected images of material objects, which vary in exactitude with the colour and purity of the mirror. Nor is it requisite to look far beyond our own circle to find illustrations of this diversity, and instances in which it is distinctly marked. Among a variety of individuals one may be remarkable for tender sympathy with physical suffering, and who finds his chief delight in contributing to its mitigation. Another feels deeper interest in lessening the sins than the sufferings of men; in full assurance that when the former are removed the latter will necessarily cease. The chosen effort of a third is to protect weakness from the aggressions of power, and to aid in the administration of strict justice among men. While a fourth deems it of supreme impor-

tance to dissipate error, and enlighten the ignorant. These are salient examples of great dissimilarity, selected for the sake of perspicuity; and it will be evident that characters so different, whatever their mutual affection and respect, might find difficulty in working harmoniously together. Indeed, a large proportion of the disagreements and misunderstandings of good men may be ascribed to the different quality of the good affections they respectively cultivate.

In the present life good and evil, and all conceivable varieties of each, exist in contiguity; but, when its discipline is finished, the Lord in tender mercy to His children separates the uncongenial and incongruous elements of the human family, and brings together those who are in accordant affections. He thus 'sets the solitary in families,' and forms distinct heavenly societies of angels whose ruling love is similar, and who therefore can find their highest delight in the exercise of some common function. And the suggestion is offered, that to these societies thus constituted and the heavens they form and occupy, our natural stars—those 'patens of bright gold' with which the 'floor of heaven is thick inlaid'—may possibly correspond:—unless, indeed, that correspondence should be sought in broader principles inclusive of many such more particular affections, and in larger communities embracing a proportionate number of such societies.

Angels and spirits, we are taught, are near the earth on which they formerly lived as men. The angels who are the appointed mediums through whom all the divine influences that reach the consciousness are bestowed, were inhabitants like us of this planet. It is they who surround us in infancy and youth, who are present in every good affection of

our maturer years, and who preside over our second birth into the spiritual world. It is they who vivify the conscience to resist evil allurements, and combat for us in temptation. It is their presence which suggests consolatory thoughts, and induces peaceful states, to support us in seasons of affliction; and it is with them and the heavens they constitute that the reverential reading of the Holy Word brings us into conjunction. Only they who have a nature resembling ours, who have passed through similar experience, and are in possession of the same written Word, can be adapted to these ministrations. However widely the natives of one planet may differ from each other, still there is a community of state between them that cannot subsist between any of them and the inhabitants of another planet; especially of a planet belonging to another system. Swedenborg's work *On the Earths in the Universe* exhibits some of these diversities in a distinct and striking manner; and gives intimations of the interior changes of state—represented outwardly by distance of space and time—that were effected in him, before he could be brought into communication with the spirits of distant earths belonging to other suns; or into a state sufficiently like theirs for communication to be possible. If then the spirits of one individual earth, embodied and disembodied, in all their variety, are thus distinguished by some predominant general affection which binds them into a community no others can enter; is it not probable that the spirits of one system have, also, a common character;—that some more general affection pervades their life, peculiar to themselves, which as a bond of union brings them into a similar, though still broader, definite relation? The existence of an actual

relationship between the different members of our solar system is both perceived and testified by Sir John F. W. Herschel, who, when discussing Kepler's third law, eloquently observes: 'When we contemplate the constituents of the planetary system from the point of view which this relation affords us, it is no longer mere analogy which strikes us—no longer a general resemblance among them, as individuals independent of each other, and circulating about the sun, each according to its own peculiar nature, and connected by its own peculiar tie. The resemblance is now perceived to be a true *family* likeness; they are bound up in one chain—interwoven in one web of mutual relation and harmonious agreement—subjected to one pervading influence, which extends from the centre to the farthest limits of that great system, of which all of them, the earth included, must henceforth be regarded as members.' Is it a mere vagary of the imagination to infer from the fact so distinctly recognised by the great astronomer of a definite natural relation, that a spiritual one exists also? Is not the natural connection derived from the spiritual one? Could there be kindred worlds were there not kindred souls similarly related? It is only by some common and all-pervading principle of goodness that millions of the human race from distant worlds can be related, associated, and classified: and may not such a principle or affection, as is here supposed, be that to which each star specifically corresponds?

But the stars are also suns, and as such have a different though harmonious correspondence. Swedenborg informs us that the sun of the natural world is pure fire; and the statement applies to all the suns in the universe: also, that

'it is derived from the sun of the angelic heaven, which is . . . divine love, proximately proceeding from God, who is in the midst of it.' It follows that all the natural suns have a similar origin, and that the stars so considered correspond to the spiritual sun from which they are derived; and their heat and light to its emanations of divine love and wisdom. Each one images that sun in being, by divine creative power acting through it, the parent of its own circling system of dependent worlds; and the support of the indefinite variety of creatures existing upon them. But as no two blades of grass are alike—mere repetitions of each other—so no two suns are alike. They may be expected to differ in their physical constitution; there are observable differences in the colour of their light; and the researches of science now demonstrate an actual diversity in the constituent stellar elements. Diverse as they must be, they all represent the heavenly sun; but they represent it finitely and therefore variously. May it without irreverence be presumed that each particular sun represents it with special reference to some one element of the pure Love which constitutes it—some one of those 'infinite things' which in the Lord are 'distinctly a one?' Thus considered, as suns they would represent this element as it exists in the Lord Himself, or in the sun which encompasses Him; and as stars the same divine principle as received by angelic communities. And may not the inhabitants of all the worlds—the planets and their satellites—dependent on each, and the heavenly societies formed from them, all trace their differences from other men and other angels to the preponderance in their spiritual constitution and character of the element represented?

When all the associated ideas and convictions are taken into account, it may safely be averred that no sublimer spectacle exists in nature than that of the 'star-strown vistas' of the encircling heavens. As we stand beneath the celestial vault, imbibing delicious draughts

'From the cool cisterns of the midnight air,'

when the atmosphere is clear and the sky moonless; we gaze on a scene that to the uninstructed mind would be one of the utmost wonder and mystery; were not the mind always unobservant and uninquiring in proportion to its ignorance. And though in the degree of its enlightenment the mystery subsides, it only yields its place to a profounder feeling of more reverent wonder.

The scene has besides a different and higher effect. On minds adapted to its reception, the view of the surrounding sky with its starry hosts produces an impression of solemn and profoundest peace. It may not be easy to trace this effect to its cause; but the fact is testified by experience. It is not due to the pomp and splendour of the serried ranks, nor to the order of their progress through the heavens; though some just apprehension of their nature and harmonious movements may be necessary as a recipient plane. Possibly it is derived from that perception of correspondences which, though lost to the external man, is still the property of the internal; and, like the universal language of spirits, becomes his conscious possession in the spiritual world. Eye and ear are closed to both; but there are mental states and experiences that only become intelligible on the supposition, that some faint reflexion of the light of the spiritual mind still irradiates the natural mind also; though dimmed, discoloured, and distorted by

its perverted forms. In tranquil summer evenings when the air is bland, and the harsh sounds of day's busy traffic are stilled, so that the outward harmony is undisturbed; as the eye gazes upward and around, the mind imbibes an inward serenity corresponding to the calm of outward nature. Time flits by unheeded; earthly objects lose—for the time—their factitious, and retain only their actual value and proportion. The all-encompassing and interpenetrating sphere of divine love fills and satisfies the soul; the Prince of Peace is Himself present; and to the heart, though not the ear, His words are audible: 'My peace I give unto you.'

A view of the heavens leaves on the imagination the impression that the visible stars are innumerable. This, however, is an error founded on an optical illusion; for those seen at one time by the unassisted eye only amount to about 3000: though with the aid of the telescope a vastly increased number are discernible. Indeed, as many as a quarter of a million have actually been registered in the catalogues of astronomers: while the number in the entire heavens visible to us is computed to exceed 20 millions. To these must be added—would we form some idea of the vast multitude—the stars of the resolvable nebulæ, which to human sense are innumerable, and to human thought inconceivable; one of these nebulæ alone, that familiar to us as the Milky Way, being estimated to contain more than 100 millions. As instruments, also, of greater space-penetrating power are constructed, the more distant nebulæ become resolvable into distinct stars; so that, adopting the words of Sir John F. W. Herschel, 'for anything experi-

ence has hitherto taught us, the number of the stars may be really infinite, in the only sense in which we can assign a meaning to the word'—beyond human ability to imagine or compute.

If the number of the stars oppresses and overwhelms the imagination, how shall it conceive the immensity of the space that contains them, and in which their vast cycles are performed, each being millions of millions of miles distant from the earth and from each other! For the whole heavens are in motion. 'The sun himself moves through space, and draws with him all his numerous train, and yet the distances and relative positions of the different stellar bodies undergo no apparent change. Member of a vaster system, and one still unknown, he describes in thousands —in millions—perhaps, of centuries his mighty orbit;' though with such velocity that in a year he traverses more than 150 millions of miles. All the stars, 'fixed' as they are called and actually appear, as century after century the observer finds them on the meridian at one precise instant, are in similar, and some in more rapid movement; astronomers consequently admit the conception that, at some unknown and far distant period, the very configuration of the heavens may be changed; and the individual stars which compose the familiar constellations that in the dawn of the historic period regulated the labours of the agriculturist, and now guide the mariner across the ocean, may be separated, to become elements of new groups under a new nomenclature.

And these 'stars are suns, effulgent centres of light and life to myriads of unseen worlds! . . . Such is the last verdict of science:' a verdict, however, anticipated by the

intuitions of rationality and intelligence. In what is called the solar system, to which belongs the earth on which we live, there are—exclusive of the asteroids, respecting which there is less certain information—at the least twenty-six primary and secondary planets, probably more :—all habitable worlds, or in preparation to become so. If to each of these inconceivable millions of stars an average of only twenty planets be assigned, how vast the increase, the exaltation of the total amount of the heavenly bodies! But if the number of worlds is so immense and incalculable, what conception can be formed of that of their inhabitants ; for every one of them is the habitation of rational beings like ourselves ;—similar to us in all the essential components of humanity, however wide the individual differences ;—all receptive of natural and spiritual affections : of conjugal, parental, filial, and fraternal love ; of the love of the Lord and the neighbour ;—all born to become angels !

Here the mind pauses,—arrested by the thought that the infinite Creator of all these suns and habitable worlds, and of the innumerable multitudes that dwell upon them,—multitudes so innumerable that imagination reels and quails in the effort to attain a sense of their immensity,—knows the particular states, even to the minutest incident, of every individual of the vast whole, and provides for the necessities of each ; maintaining all in freedom, yet leading and drawing them to Himself. However much the inhabitants of other planets and other systems may differ from us, human beings wherever they come into existence are alike in this ;—that they are born natural and have to become spiritual by regeneration. And though, being less

immersed in external and worldly things, this may be more easily accomplished, and by less painful processes than with us; yet, with every one a choice has to be made and a struggle to be undergone between opposing principles. In all the changes and fluctuations of state attendant on this conflict, the Lord is intimately present with all His rational offspring throughout the universe; cherishing and succouring each infirm purpose and feeble effort till, with those who persevere, it is finally triumphant, and another happy spirit is prepared for the angelic heavens. 'How annihilating are these considerations to everything that is little or selfish in our nature, how exalting are they of everything appertaining to us that is truly noble—of that heavenly spark within by which we have affinity, in our finite degree, with the great Lord and Father of all, and are capable of rising into His image! Compared with the immensity of the creation and the infinity of the Creator, we, individually, are nothing: but considered as having that belonging to us (though all by His gift) in which the Creator can dwell,—as either having, actually, conjunction of life with Him, or, at least, the capacity of attaining it,—of being in Him, as our Redeemer, and He in us,—a reflexion of His majesty irradiates our nothingness: we feel that, in Him, we, also, are something, yea, as much as we could be, were there no other created beings in the universe. The indefinite greatness of the multitude of His rational offspring does not diminish the power of the almighty Creator and Redeemer of magnifying each to the utmost capability of reception belonging to a created being.'*

From the aggregate numbers of the human race existing

* Noble's *Astronomical Doctrine of a Plurality of Worlds.*

at a given moment on all the different centres of life distributed throughout the universe, we may glance at the incalculably greater numbers who, having finished their preparatory state of existence, have quitted the natural sphere and become angels ;—at them and the immensity of the heavens prepared for their final home and resting-place. It is calculated that 36 millions of people of our own globe die annually. Swedenborg compares the throng of disembodied spirits whom he saw entering the spiritual world, in one place, to a great army, and in another, to a mighty river. But these, like the number just stated, were unquestionably from this earth to which he belonged. How vast, then, in comparison even with numbers so inconceivable, the immense streams of living souls hourly poured into that world from the grand total of inhabited orbs ! Of these multitudes each angel has his own place and office appointed by the divine providence of the Lord, and contributes his modicum to the perfection of the whole heaven which, as a Grand Man, is from moment to moment becoming more perfectly an image and likeness of Him. Then, further, who shall declare when the mighty work began—through what vast cycles of time, comparable perhaps to geologic periods or inter-planetary spaces, these armies of the Lord of hosts, these living streams, have added their accumulating numbers to the vast ocean of angelic life ! It is calculated by astronomers that thousands of years have elapsed since the light by which certain stars are visible to us issued from its source ; and that the rays from some of the more distant nebulæ take millions of years in their transit to us ; and, possibly, for as many ages have the dependent planets been semi-

naries for the human race and the angelic heavens! Speculations on the commencement of creation are, indeed, purely imaginary; but that life once communicated will never be recalled—streams of life once set flowing never ebb—the happiness of angels never cease—are certainties. Through eternity will these streams of souls continue to flow, not, like the rivers that water the earth, toward a distant ocean to be re-absorbed in the mighty flood and lose their individuality; but towards their Parent Source; each to receive a fuller life and more distinct identity.

The contemplation of endless duration; of a state ever in progress but never approaching a termination, even though that progress be towards increasing perfection and felicity, has in it something producing an impression of the deepest awe, almost allied to fear. Individually we exclaim: 'Such knowledge is too wonderful for me, it is high, I cannot attain unto it;' and the mind gladly descends from thoughts of eternity—heights so far surpassing its powers—to its accustomed periods of yesterday, to-day, and to-morrow, as limitations adequate to its narrow perceptions; and finds rest in the small circle and daily routine of domestic and social duties.

The treatment of the subjects of this essay may probably be considered slight and unsatisfactory; they have, in fact, been glanced at rather than discussed; and for these reasons:—they are outside the range of ordinary thought, and not adapted to any immediate practical effect; some of them, besides, are not capable of demonstration. Should it be asked whether these reasons are

not sufficiently weighty to restrain the mind from all exercise of thought in relation to them; the reply is this: There are many momentous truths—natural and spiritual—the knowledge of which is most valuable and important, that are not included among those popularly called *practical*—that cannot be embodied in any specific external acts. They have a more exalted use than this. Few, perhaps, of the higher truths of natural science are capable of immediate application to the outward uses of life. Their first office is to elevate and expand the rational mind, to give it a wider range and deeper insight; to remove obscurities and impediments that retard the progress of science, by showing the real character of the agencies at work in the sphere of nature. Gradually, however, clearer light descends and diffuses itself; and, ultimately, the profound deduction or the minute and curious observation, at which the superficial only scoffed, becomes the guiding light to some beneficent invention that increases the welfare of nations. So, too, the more interior spiritual truths have no specific deeds in which they can at once be outwardly expressed in practice. Their proper effect is to influence all practice by pervading the whole mind, elevating the whole character, and permeating the meanest actions with a purer life.

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